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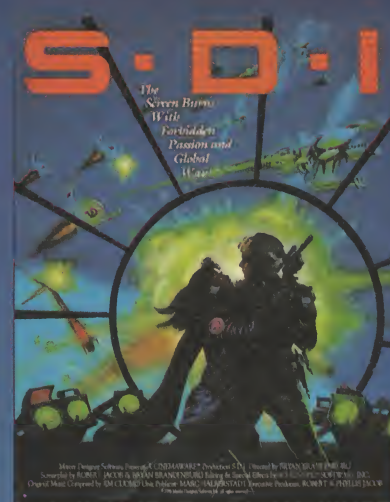
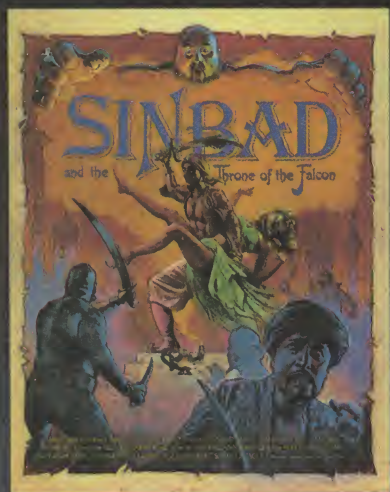
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AND AMIGA
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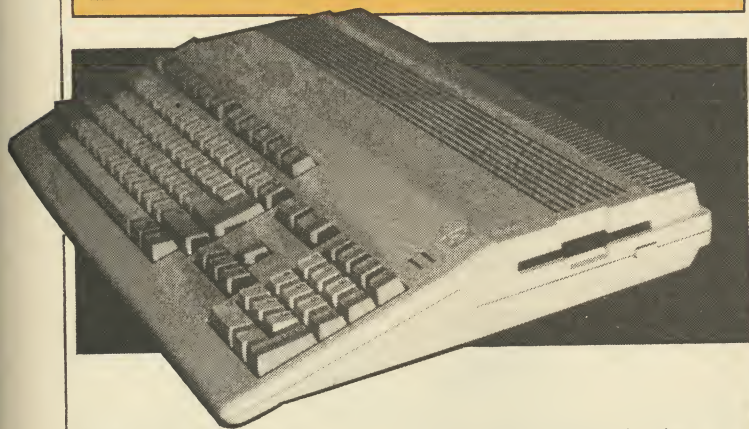
CINEMAWARE



THE BALANCE OF POWER

These days it seems impossible to mention the words 'Amiga' or 'Atari ST' without sending someone into paroxysms of rage. From then on, you're not likely to get any sense from the injured party... In an attempt to bring a balanced view of the 16-Bit situation, ZZAP! takes a step back and looks at both machines, their history and capabilities and gives programmers of both machines a chance to air their opinions.

COMMODORE AMIGA



Early in 1985 the ailing Commodore company bought the rights to the Amiga project from ex-Atari Jay Miner, much to the displeasure of Jack Tramiel, who had only recently bought Atari (the legal wrangles continue to date).

With rumours of an Atari 16-Bit based machine, Commodore were under duress to release the Amiga and, as with the ST, the first batch to surface were rushed, having a bug-ridden operating system that loaded in from disk.

While Atari targetted their machine at the lower end of the market, the Amiga, complete with impressive graphics and multi-tasking capabilities was pushed as a business machine-cum-executive toy. It is generally regarded that Commodore got it completely wrong, and while the Amiga floundered in the no-man's land of the 'serious amateur', Atari's ST was busy building up a strong public following and a similarly large software base.

Initially, the Amiga appeared as the A1000, looking every bit the serious computer, complete with a colour monitor perched atop the hardware case, separate keyboard and a mouse. Sales were rather poor and the decision was made to release the more compact and considerably cheaper A500, which appeared in the Autumn of 86.

The A500 saw the first real attempt at taking Atari on at their

own game, with the hardware, keyboard and disk drive contained in one case. Unfortunately a standard TV modulator was still in omission, leaving the necessity of a monitor.

The Amiga uses the Motorola 68000 16/32 bit processor, running at a clock speed of 7.14 MHz. This is a touch slower than the ST, but more than makes up for this deficiency by the addition of multi-tasking custom chips which handle many graphics features on their own, leaving the main processor to run the bulk of the program. Screen resolution has four modes: 640x400, 640x200 and 320x400 with 16 colours (chosen from a palette of 4096 colours) and 320x200 which can support up to 32 colours on-screen. There's also a 'hold and modify' (HAM) mode which displays all 4,096 colours on-screen, although it only works with static pixels.

Musically, the Amiga is superb, with four, nine-octave FM stereo sound channels, and a novel built-in speech synthesiser. The A500 also has eight hardware sprites, hardware scrolling and a bit Blitter for the high-speed transfer of data.

The machine that members of the public are most likely to get their hands on, can be obtained for around the £460 mark, which includes the A500, mouse, external TV modulator and some bundled games and blank disks.

ATARI ST

News of Atari's first steps into the world of the 16-Bit home computer market came in the summer of 1985 when, following the launch of Commodore's Amiga, Jack Tramiel announced the impending release of the ST in direct competition to Commodore's new wonder-machine.

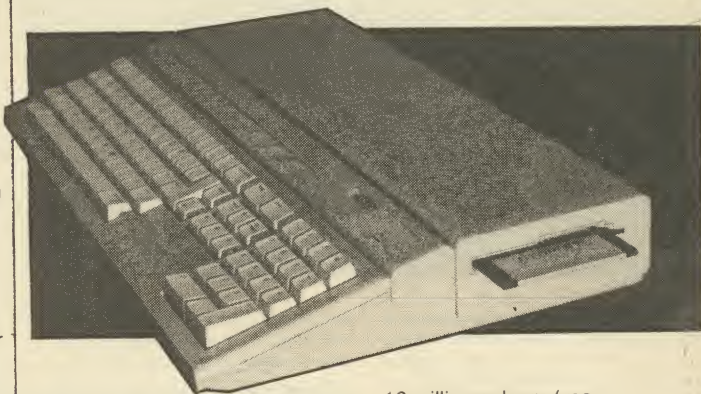
The ST, according to rumour, had been in development even before Tramiel started at Atari, but apart from the internal hardware designs, little else had been produced. An operating system was still needed, as was a usable front end and some form of BASIC.

The built-in software used is a version of CPM/68K, renamed TOS (Tramiel Operating System). A Graphics Environment Manager (GEM) was purchased from IBM, and the BASIC was hastily

STs, complete with blitter chip and 2Mb and 4Mb memories.

All versions utilise the Motorola 68000 16/32 bit internal processor, which runs at a clock speed of 8 MHz (slightly faster than the Amiga). The screen display has three modes of resolution: 640x400 pixels, which can only be used in conjunction with a monochrome monitor, 640x200 pixels with four colours on-screen, and the normal 'games' mode of 320x200 pixels with 16 colours. All colour selections are made from an internal palette of 512.

Recently Atari have announced plans of a new super add-on based around the Inmos T800 Transputer chip, which turns the ST into an incredibly fast mini-computer. A 32-Bit Blitter chip handles the graphics, supporting



obtained from Metacomco, a British 68000 company, who were also responsible for AmigaDOS.

Atari were so keen to release the machine that the first production models required the user to load the 200K TOS from disk before it could be used. New machines have a de-bugged version of TOS on ROM.

Late 1985 saw the first appearance of the standard Atari 520 ST in Britain. Unfortunately, it also needed an external disk drive and a colour or monochrome monitor, as no TV modulator was present. This didn't stop the machine selling in substantial quantities, mainly due to Atari's fierce marketing campaign.

Since then, the original version has been superceded by the STM with TV modulator, STFM with modulator and built-in disk drive and the 1040 ST with one-meg memory. Recently Atari have released a new breed of super

16 million colours (yes, 16,000,000) on the lowest resolution 512x480 screen. It certainly sounds exciting, but we'll have to wait until June 1988 before the finished product can be seen.

Musically, the ST is poorly catered for, since the sound chip is the same as the one used in the Spectrum 128 and Amstrad CPC range. There are three separate eight-octave sound channels and a separate white noise channel. However, the addition of MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) ports allow direct access to any MIDI compatible synthesisers. There's plenty of MIDI software on the market, and the machine is used by many professional musicians, including Midge Ure.

Pricing is one of the Atari's strong points, with a complete and ready-to-run 520 STFM currently retailing around the £260 mark. A 1040 ST with 1Mb drive retails at around £480.

WHAT THE PROGRAMMERS SAY ...

To present a (hopefully) balanced account of both machines, the ZZAP! team interviewed several programmers who have been hard at work with both the Amiga and Atari ST. The first lamb to the slaughter was **John Darnell**, programmer of *Dragon's Lair*, *Escape from Singe's Castle* and *Starpaws*, who has been working on an Amiga for a couple of months.

He has strong feelings about the way the Amiga has been marketed. 'Commodore botched it'

American magazine called *Byte* who run a 'Bits' network (similar to Compunet) and everyone spends their time on it discussing the bugs in the Amiga operating system! If you go via the OS, you lose 20% of your processing time, so you have to ditch that. If you do want to learn how to use the machine, you have to spend another £110 on the equivalent of the 64's programmers guide, and then you have to read it all at least twice! I went to the Commodore show, and said to

a heretic!'

Next, we spoke to **Peter Johnson**, author of *ST Arkanoïd*, who's currently working on Atari and Amiga versions of *Wizball*.

'The ST's power lies entirely in the 68000,' he says. 'It's a bit like the Spectrum, where everything has to be done via the CPU. This means that most ST games will be slower than the equivalent games on the Amiga. The main handicap of the ST is the screen layout which makes scrolling difficult to achieve. You have to store large chunks of the graphics in memory and manipulate them before printing them to the screen, which takes up a lot of memory and processor time. You can cheat, of course, by limiting the number of colours or reducing the number of (software) sprites and making the playing area smaller. The sound chip is pretty bad too, but one way around this is to have a MIDI out-

put so that people with MIDI synths can hear the music that way. *Arkanoïd* does that.

'In the future, new techniques will certainly evolve, but the lack of internal hardware in the ST means that there are no things to perform tricks with, like sprite multiplexing or sprites in the border.'

Andy Onions and **Ian Oliver** from Realtime Software, programmers of Spectrum *Starglider* and Rainbird's forthcoming *Carrier Command*, also agree with this.

'First of all, you have to realise that the ST is much cheaper and simpler. There's little assistance from the machine when you write a game - it's just a big screen.

Creating sprites and the suchlike is also down purely to the power of the processor. To save processing time, we always write direct to the hardware, ignoring the operating system. The OS on the ST is abysmal - but it works. Oddly enough the majority of software houses are leaving the operating system on ...

► **Ian Oliver and Andy Onions** of Realtime Software



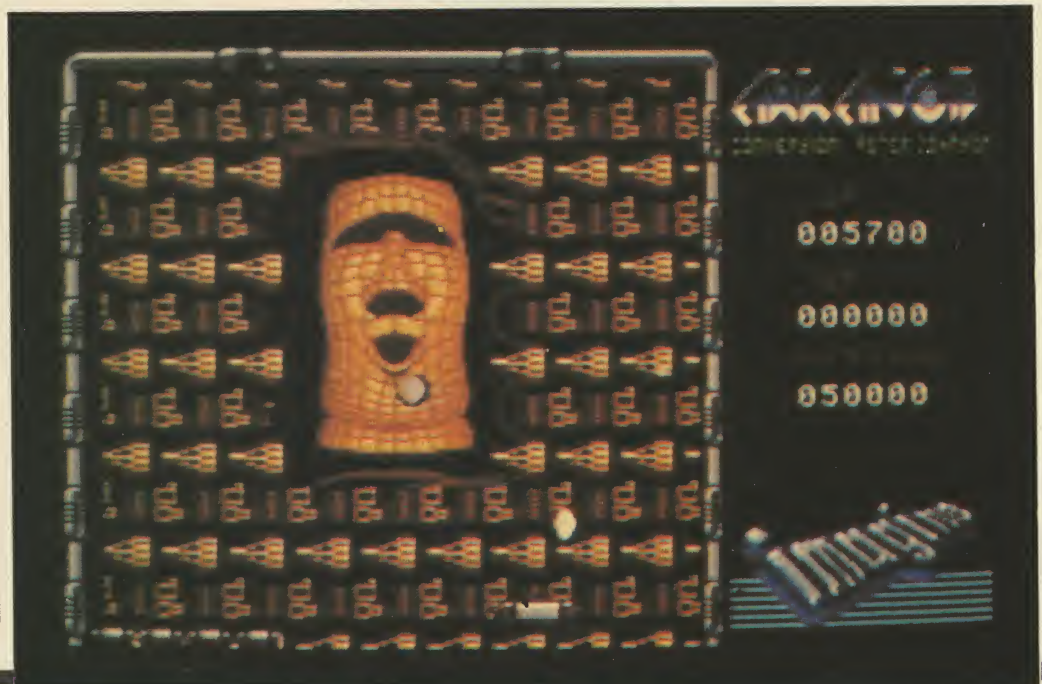
exclaims John. 'The whole thing is very reminiscent of the 64 versus Spectrum fight of a few years ago. The 64 was obviously the more powerful machine, but while Commodore pushed it as a potential business computer, Sinclair was quite happy selling the Spectrum to the general public and creating a huge software and user base.

'There's no doubt that the Amiga is a more powerful machine - it's absolutely incredible and it will be years before its full power is touched. The ST is good, but it just doesn't have the same potential.

'The main argument is the price. Joe Bloggs in the street goes into a computer shop and sees both machines. They're both labelled as 16-Bit, but the ST's sitting there with a £299 price tag. His choice is obvious. Basically, the Amiga hasn't been marketed properly. That's not to say that it will flop, though - it's too good a machine.'

His grievances don't only lie with Commodore's marketing: 'Their support for the Amiga is pretty bad. They spent millions developing an operating system that no-one needs and which is still full of bugs. In fact, there's an

the people on the Amiga stand, I don't want the operating system. I was looked upon as something of



'The Amiga is just the opposite: it does it all for you. Technically the ST has no advantages over the Amiga - with the possible exception of the disk drive and a fractionally faster clock. But then, you get what you pay for. If the Amiga was the price of an ST, no-one would be buying STs. The A500's a beautiful machine, but priced wrongly. You can now get an ST for the price of a Spectrum +3. No-one in their right mind would buy a new 8-Bit machine these days, and the + is totally overpriced. We don't know how Atari do it. At the price, it's a bargain.

'The main problem at the moment with the Amiga is the software base: the games are still expensive and it will take time to increase the amount of users. It's the development time that costs. We could knock cheap games out in three weeks, but they'd be rubbish. Then again, we've already seen some full-price rubbish on the ST. The price of games has a large influence on the sale of the machine. The Amiga might be caught in the same trap as the 64 was when it first came out. The hardware was expensive, so the software was priced accordingly. Then the price of the 64 came down, but the software remained the same. This could happen to the Amiga.'

Graftgold's **Andrew Braybrook** is a staunch Amiga fanatic and launched into the discussion saying: 'It annoys me when people say the Amiga and ST are similar. The Amiga has loads of custom



Morpheus, which only filled 64K. How long will it take to utilise all the available space of a half meg? You have to have more than one man on each game, and use utilities. You can't really do graphics in hex, so development software is also important.

'At the moment Amiga games tend to be converted from the ST,

'I'm certainly glad that both machines are around. I don't want to see either disappear. There's plenty of competition which pushes the programmers along.'

Finally, we spoke to **Steve Bak**, whose extensive 16-Bit works include *Goldrunner*, *Jupiter Probe*, *Karate Kid II* and *Battleships*. He admits 'the operating system on the Amiga is really bad. The first thing I do when working on either machine is to completely destroy the OS, so that it never interferes with the program that I put in. In this way I can save 80K on the ST and 100K on the Amiga.

'I can certainly understand the debate that surrounds them. I mean, who's going to spend four or five hundred pounds on a machine and then say it's a load of rubbish? I disagree with the 64 and Spectrum analogy though, a closer comparison would be to the 64 and Amstrad.

'I'm sure that the ST will be more successful in the long run. Atari are right behind the machine. Atari's boss knows what direction to go in, and his staff know what direction to go in - the technical support is brilliant.

'Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about Commodore: they still insist that the Amiga is mainly a business machine, and are actually discouraging the production of games. I phoned Commodore and asked about a development pack for the Amiga. I was working for Microdeal at the time, and the reply I got was, and I quote, 'if you have games in your catalogue we will not sell you a development kit'.

'From a programming point of view the Atari is faster than the Amiga. Metacomco's assembler runs about 50% faster on the ST, due to the clock speed - the Amiga's complicated operating system slows it down. The Amiga

has the Blitter, but it isn't as impressive as Commodore would have us believe. When the Blitter is running, the main processor can't be used, and it's only useful for moving large objects around, rather than, say, small lumps of graphics for scrolling.

'There are other things like speech. The Amiga handles it better, but at the expense of memory. The 40 seconds of speech in *Goldrunner* takes up 140K on the Amiga, but only 46K on the ST.

'A main disadvantage of the ST is the single-sided disk drive. The Amiga's drive is double sided, so we can put twice as much data on one disk, as we did for *Karate Kid II*, which had eight backdrops instead of four. It's also more economical since we save on the cost of a second disk.

'Without doubt, the Amiga is the ultimate games machine (whatever Commodore would have us believe to the contrary), but I look at each machine from the inside out. I'm not really interested in their value, only what I can sell as a games writer. In that case, the ST comes out tops. ST software is outselling Amiga software by about four to one at the moment. You can buy an Atari STFM cheaper than a 64 and disk drive, and the 1040 ST is about the same price as the Amiga. At the end of the day, the most important difference is the cost.'

In this article, we have tried to remain unbiased, while still presenting the advantages and disadvantages of each machine. The programmers we spoke to offered their own opinions, and while some readers may disagree with their thoughts, this article is not intended to kindle a debate.



► Andrew Braybrook hard at work...

capabilities while the ST has little extra chip support. The ST has the opportunity for a Blitter upgrade, but you can't write for it until everyone has one.

'Writing software is a totally different ball-game. The ST is effectively 'empty' and you have to fill it up, whereas the Amiga has lots of potential for writing to the built in custom chips. You have to obey the rules of the operating system, which involves hacking your way through the expensive manuals.

'Time is a major problem: it took about 1400 man hours to write

but neither one is being pushed at the present time. Games aren't as polished as they should be and Amiga owners are snobbish: they don't like to see their machine doing things that others can do! Both machines should be comparable until around the end of 1989, but after that the superior graphics of the Amiga will lend itself to polished arcade conversions while the ST might go for games which rely more on number-crunching. The Amiga will be a true arcade quality machine, and the ST more of a thinking man's machine.

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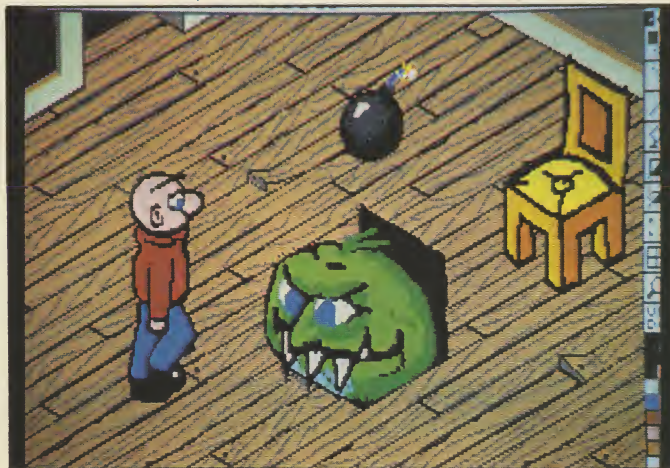
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RAINBIRD

Realtime Software, programmers of Spectrum *Starstrike* and *Starglider*, are currently working on *Carrier Command*, a combat simulator for both the Atari ST and Amiga.

The player takes control of a futuristic aircraft carrier, equipped with four aircraft and four tanks, and conquers an archipelago of some 64 islands. The computer controlled enemy has the same weapons and equipment, so a fair degree of cunning, dextral ability and strategy have to be applied if the mission is to succeed.

The game features filled-in 3D graphics which run smoothly at an awesome speed, and look incredible. *Carrier Command* should be available towards the end of the month on both the ST and Amiga with a £24.95 price tag.



► Dick Special has to negotiate all manner of strange hazards in his *Search for Spook*



► Realtime's *Carrier Command* boasts some extremely fast, filled-in 3D action

After seven years of programming, American designer D Ezra Sidrah is putting the final touches to his epic *Universal Military*

Simulator, which is potentially the greatest breakthrough in computer wargaming to date.

The UMS is a wargame con-

► Magnetic Scrolls' latest game, *Jinxter*, features static graphics of their usual high standard



struction kit, allowing the player to pit an army of his own making against the massed forces of any other (ranging from a gang of spear-wielding savages to the most modern of NATO forces).

The battleground is displayed as a 3D grid landscape and contains many topographical features which are easily redesigned to represent any area of the world. There are also options to add cities, forests, deserts and rivers to add an extra touch of realism. The potential for creating battles is incredible, with almost infinite possibilities. Now you can pit a German Panzer Division against the entire Roman Army – on a Milton Keynes battlefield!

Armies are represented by icons and labels, and the proceedings are conducted using a comprehensive series of pull-down menus. The depth of play is phenomenal, with facts and figures for every aspect of play.

UMS is available now for the Atari ST for £24.95, with an identical version for the Amiga following in December.

Jinxter is Magnetic Scrolls' follow up to *The Pawn* and *The Guild of Thieves*. Set in modern day Aquitania (on the borders of Kervonia), the story revolves

around the player's quest to find seven links of a fragmented magical charm bracelet which previously protected the land from bad luck. Carrying the country's remaining good luck, the player sets out to recover the seven charms.

As with its predecessors, *Jinxter* contains many puzzles, served with a large dose of humour. The accompanying graphics are of a similarly high standard to Magnetic Scrolls' previous games, and the parser has again been improved. Adventurers will be pleased to hear that the program is currently available for both the ST and Amiga for £24.95.

The Solid Software team of Sandy White and Angela Sutherland (the duo responsible for *Ant Attack* and *Zombie Zombie*) are putting the finishing touches to *Dick Special: The Search For Spook* after two years of programming.

The game features detailed, cartoon style backdrops and a fully animated character who carries out a large amount of movements smoothly and convincingly. As the title infers, the action follows Dick's attempts to find and rescue his dog Spook, who has been dog-napped on the eve of the Mr Dog-giverse show. Dick explores the hotel and its rooms, avoiding all manner of hazards and inconveniences along the way.

Dick Special is to be released first on the Amiga for £24.95, with an ST version to follow soon after.

The fourth Level 9 release on the Rainbird label is *Time and Magik*, another compilation of their earlier 8-Bit games, *Lord's of Time*, *Red Moon* and *Prince of Magik*. Each adventure is accompanied by improved digitised graphics (in a similar impressionist style to those used in *Knight Orc*), and an improved parser. The package offers great value for money and is available for both machines at £19.95.

► The illustrations for Level 9's *Time and Magik* are actually digitised from original artwork



OCEAN

Sensible Software's superb shoot and collect 'em up is soon to be available for the Atari ST and Amiga, courtesy of Pete Johnson, programmer of *ST Arkanoïd*.

The gameplay is identical to the Commodore 64 version, but the graphics are improved, with finer sprite and backdrop definition, and some lovely effects: the landscape scrolls in smooth parallax and the 'feature' icons flip over when activated. An Amiga *Wizball* is also in the pipeline, but won't be finished before the New Year.

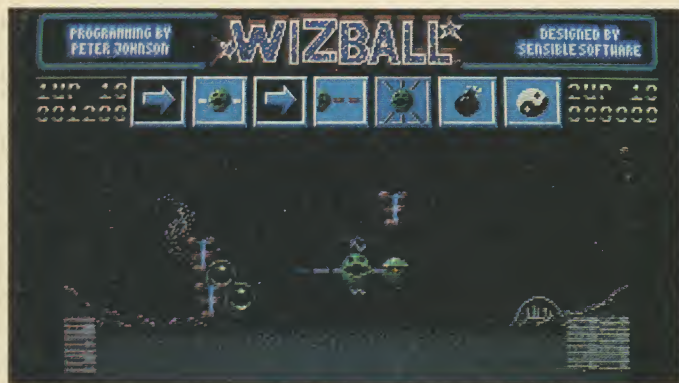
The other Ocean release is currently being programmed by Denton Design's Stoo Fotheringham. *Eco* is an innovative icon-driven game which follows the player's evolution from an insect through a possible 40,000,000,000 combinations of possible species, to a higher life form.

Each creature is animated using wire-frame graphics – initial demos of which are quite superb. Exterior factors also come into play, such as radioactive meteor showers (which mess up your DNA

strands causing mutations) and the usual predatory considerations.

Eco should be finished in six to seven weeks with, an Amiga version planned for Christmas.

► The Atari ST version of *Wizball* boasts some stunning graphics



ELECTRIC DREAMS

The popular Atari coin-op, *Super Sprint*, is the first arcade conversion from Electric Dreams. The objective is to race around a series of enclosed circuits to the finish line, avoiding hazards and the other cars – be they human or

computer controlled.

As can be seen from the screen shot, the game is more or less identical to the stand-up version, and incorporates all the features of the original, including the three player option. Atari ST owners should be able to buy the finished game by the end of the month for £19.99.



► Sensible Software's superlative 64 game has been brilliantly converted to the ST, and makes full use of the improved colour and graphics

► Ocean's innovative and unusual evolutionary game, *Eco* features some superb vector-graphic animation



► The ST version of *Super Sprint* has a three player mode, as signified by the superb options screen



◀ Budding boy racers are well catered for with the ST version of *Supersprint*

FIREBIRD

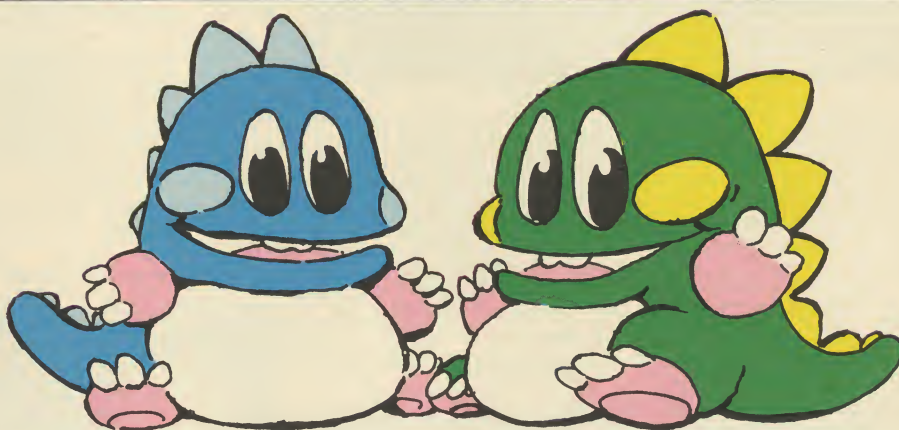
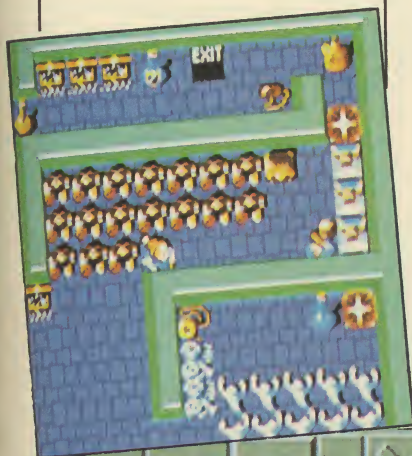
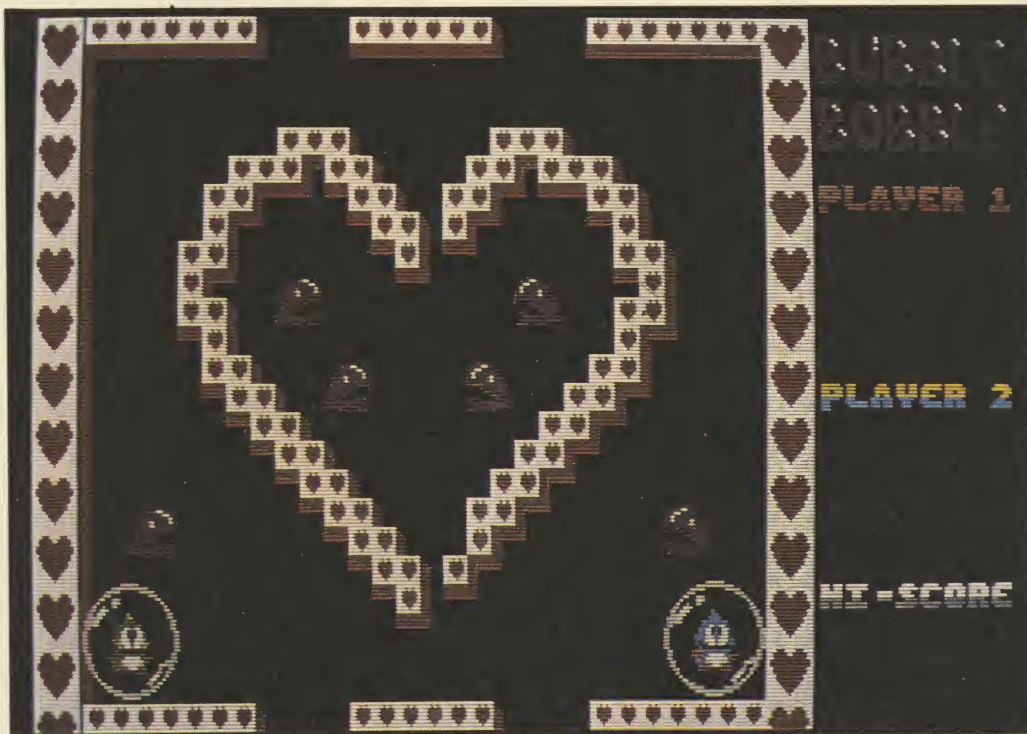
Bub and Bob the bubble-spitting brontosaurus are back again in what promises to be the best computer version of the arcade hit *Bubble Bobble*.

For all those unfamiliar with the game, it features the adventures of two brontosaurus as they travel through 100 hazard-filled screens to confront the evil Skull Monsta.

The gameplay is incredibly addictive, and it looks almost identical to the arcade original. Unfortunately there are no plans for an Amiga version, but ST owners will be able to buy *Bubble Bobble* from December.

Firebird have also been busy converting some of their more successful Silver Range games to the Atari ST. *Thrust*, *Warhawk* and *I, Ball* are just about finished and will be available on the new 16-Bit 'budget' label at around £10.

The ST version of the almost legendary *Star Trek* is also ready for an 'imminent' release around Christmas. This Christmas coming, hopefully.



NOT AS CUTE AS ME!



US GOLD

Not being a company to rest on their laurels, US Gold are all set to follow the incredible success of *Gauntlet* with the officially licensed sequel, *Gauntlet II*.

Set across most formats, *Gauntlet II* should prove a best seller when it appears on both the ST and Amiga. Plans are also afoot to make the 16-Bit conversions four player games, using a special link to connect two extra joysticks via the expansion port at the back of each machine.

Epyx also have a couple of games up their sleeve, most notably *Impossible Mission II*, the long awaited follow-up to the outstanding *Impossible Mission*. *IM II* is due out for the ST and Amiga very soon and follows a similar style of gameplay to the first. We wait with baited breath...

As with the the earlier Epyx sports simulations, *California Games* is also set to be converted to the Amiga and ST. More details when we have them.

16-BIT

MIRRORSOFT

Available soon for the ST is FTL's *Oids*, a complex *Gravitar* variant with enough laser action to satisfy even the most avid of blasting freaks. There are six increasingly difficult missions to tackle, each requiring the player to fly down to the surface of a series of alien infested planets to rescue captured soldiers.

- The later levels of *Oids* tend to get a bit tricky: witness the 23 homing missiles!



eyebrow or two with some very smart graphics.

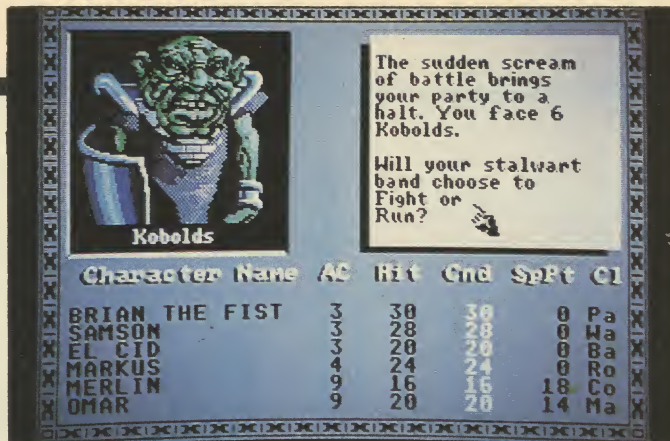
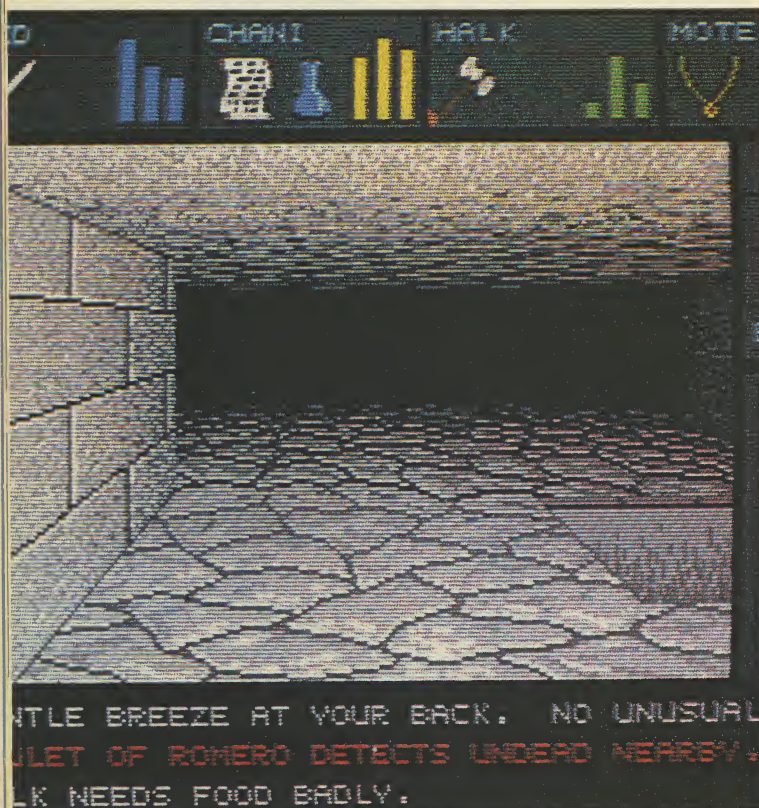
Other Mirrorsoft's programs include *Tetris*, a logic puzzle game, *Mean Streak* and *Bermuda Project*, for both the ST and Amiga, *Strike Force Harrier* and *King of Chicago* for the Amiga, and *Spitfire 40*, *Dejá Vu* and the already classic Cinemaware release, *Defender of the Crown* for the ST.

- Stunning graphics add plenty of atmosphere to Mirrorsoft's adventure/RPG, *Dungeon Master*

The second ST game from FTL is *Dungeon Master*, an RPG style game set in a labyrinthine dungeon. The action is presented in first person 3D as a band of four characters are directed through the catacombs. The game caters for combat between the characters and any of the dungeon's indigenous species as the player seeks out hidden treasures.

The ST version is at a fairly early stage, but still managed to raise an

The missions involve blasting all the alien installations and avoiding some pretty hefty defences, including gravity converters and droves of homing missiles. If a prison unit is hit, the captives escape and are rescued by landing the ship and allowing the men to board. Graphically, *Oids* is a real treat and the gameplay is absolutely superb.



- Amongst Electronic Arts' 16-bit forthcoming catalogue is the great role playing game *Bard's Tale*, which includes plenty of high-quality graphics to supplement the eerie action

ELECTRONIC ARTS

The ST conversion of the classic arcade game, *Marble Madness* has just been released by Electronic Arts, although initial impressions are disappointing—it isn't as playable as the Commodore ver-

sion. Still, you can decide for yourself if you've got £19.95 to spare.

Also available on the Electronic Arts label are *Bard's Tale*, an RPG which boasts some lovely graphics, *Degas Elite*, arguably the best art utility available for the ST and *Deluxe Paint II*, arguably the best art utility for the Amiga.

NOVAGEN

Paul Woakes' *Mercenary* caused quite a stir when it first appeared on the Atari XL and Commodore 64 at the end of 1985. Rumours of a sequel were to remain unfounded (*The Second City* being merely an add-on) until a couple of months ago, when the first pictures of *Damocles* appeared. Still far from finished, *Damocles* boasts some very fast and impressive planetary graphics, as seen from the cockpit of the player's vessel.

The completed game should contain the same captivating game style as *Mercenary*, but this time the action is set over several planets instead of just one. Interplanetary travel will therefore play a major role, as well as the normal exploratory and trading features. The game also allows the player to load in his escape status from *Mercenary* and begin the mission with the equipment which he took from Targ.

The ST version of *Damocles* is appearing first, with other formats to follow in early 1988.

- Space isn't the final frontier in *Damocles*



ELITE

The 8-Bit versions of *Battleships* have been recently dropped, the general feeling was that they weren't strong enough products to warrant a £10 price tag. However, Elite have decided to go ahead and release ST and Amiga versions.

The rules are exactly the same as the game played on paper, but benefits from animated action screens. *Battleships* is scheduled

for a mid November release, at £19.95.

The other Elite release is a conversion of the popular off-road race game, *Buggy Boy*. The player takes control of a beach buggy and drives over rough terrain, collecting flags and avoiding obstacles such as fences, rocks and logs. From the early demos we've seen, *Buggy Boy* looks and plays as well as the original. The ST version is out around December, with an Amiga version following shortly after.

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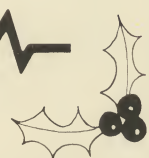
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SILVER SCREEN DREAM

Although Cinemaware are relative newcomers to the software scene, they've already made a big name for themselves. Their three 16-bit games, *Sinbad And The Throne Of The Falcon*, *Defender Of The Crown* and *SDI* have been widely acclaimed, and the Commodore 64 version of *Defender Of The Crown* has sold a record breaking 10,000 disks! How are they going to follow their successes? Julian Rignall spoke to the enthusiastic President of the Cinemaware Corporation, Bob Jacob, about future presentations.

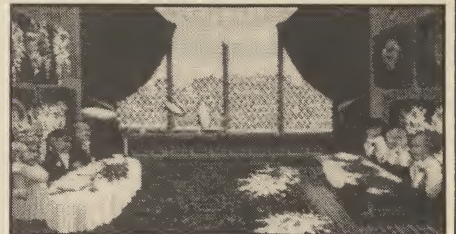
Cinemaware first launched themselves into the software world with the Amiga version of *Defender Of The Crown*. The stunning graphics and sampled sound impressed many, and even though the game was a little easy to complete, it instantly became a yardstick for future Amiga software. Shortly after came *Sinbad And The Throne Of The Falcon*, which although not quite so visually impressive, had more depth in the gameplay. So, what now?

'We've nearly finished our next game,' reveals Bob, 'it's a gangster game called *King Of Chicago*. The end product will have 20 digitised sound effects and 30 different tunes.'

well, it'll blow you away – it's being written by the composer of the Oregon Symphony Orchestra!

Also planned for a Spring release is *The Three Stooges*, an officially licensed game based on the old American comedy film characters. 'It's being written by the same guy who wrote the navigation program for the Space Shuttle,' Bob says. 'The sound is going to be very impressive, with over 900K of compressed digitised sound effects – more than any other computer game. The graphics are a mixture of digitised film as well as computer animation. We feel that this is the first computer program which really takes

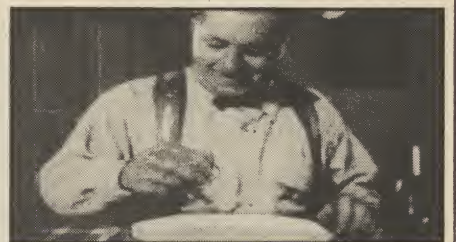
'The limitation is with disk space,' Bob admits. 'At the moment we're exploring the potential of interactive CD, and with 600 Mb of storage there's plenty of room! We're just trying to expand our themes. We're trying to appeal to people who love interactive experience. There are two types of person, one sort who just sits there and likes to be entertained, and the other



► *The Three Stooges in a custard pie fight*

type who loves to join in – that's the type of person we try and attract. We make our games easy to get into, so that the casual gamer can enjoy them.'

With plans for interactive CD, will Cinemaware move away from the humble



► *Digitised animation from Stooges*

Commodore 64? 'No,' comes the firm answer. '*SDI* is currently being converted to the 64, and that looks really special. If you thought the graphics on *Defender Of The Crown* were good, wait until you see the ones on *SDI* – they make *Defender's* look like a Spectrum game! We've taken the original Atari ST version and completely redesigned it, adding six extra arcade sequences. The gameplay has also been tweaked. After that comes *Sinbad* . . .'



► *Rocket Ranger takes to the air*

There are also plans for Commodore 64 versions of *Rocket Ranger* and *The Three Stooges* and, for the summer of 1988, *Bushido*, a Japanese type of *Defender Of The Crown* which sounds very promising indeed. It certainly looks like the interactive film genre has a very, very bright future ahead . . .



► *Defender of the Crown – the largest selling 64 disk-based game to date*

As a gangster game, would *King Of Chicago* be violent? 'We are programming for an older audience, so there'll be a lot of romance and a little explicit language, but it's all mild stuff really. The trouble is that people go totally overboard when anyone mentions sex or violence. If you look around, everything has a sexual element – just look at adverts for example. It shows how immature attitudes are towards computer games – you put in a little sex and people go crazy!'

The demo of *King Of Chicago* that Bob bought along certainly looks very impressive – but the early demos of two releases scheduled for spring next year look even better! The first is *Rocket Ranger*, 'a Forties cliffhanger serial featuring Nazi spies, trips to the moon and an unflappable hero'.

Bob expands: 'The game is split into chapters, each one ending on a cliffhanger. There are plenty of arcade sequences, and the music . . .

full advantage of its licence.'

In that case, does he feel that generally licences tend to fall short of their potential?

'Yes. Look at *Laurel And Hardy* – it's terrible, it has nothing to do with the characters.' And then continuing on the licence theme: 'The thing is, in Britain people think that they can only succeed if there are 30 sprites on screen. It's the content that counts. In the end it all comes down to a matter of time. In the UK it's not economically possible to spend time on anything. Over in America we spend at least a year on a project. We have two artists working for six months, a computer graphics man, a programmer and one person working on sound. We spend a lot of money on talented people . . .'

With all those people working away, do they find that they are at all limited by the machines they work with?

OUT NOW!!

ZZAP! takes a look at the latest and greatest 16-Bit releases

BARBARIAN

Palace Software, £14.99

That controversial slice 'em up game is back again – this time on the Atari ST and Amiga. *Barbarian* has two options: a head-to-head combat practice and mission, where the player battles ten fighters and a Wizard to rescue a maiden.

Palace sound superno, Richard Joseph has used sampled sound effects to create a stunning atmosphere. Swishing and clanking swords, grunts, screams of pain and even gasps of effort play a perfect part in the action. Listening to a fight is incredible – it

sounds just like a Conan film!

It's a shame there isn't a solo practice option, as rescuing the Princess stops the action just as things are hotting up! Mind you, the action is still thoroughly enjoyable, with some adrenalin-pumping fight sequences.

Barbarian is definitely the sort of game that gets loaded time and time again. It plays beautifully and has a fabulous 'feel' – you can really identify with the fighters. At a relatively cheap £15, *Barbarian* offers plenty of gory entertainment and shouldn't be missed.

OVERALL 89%



RANARAMA

Hewson, £19.95

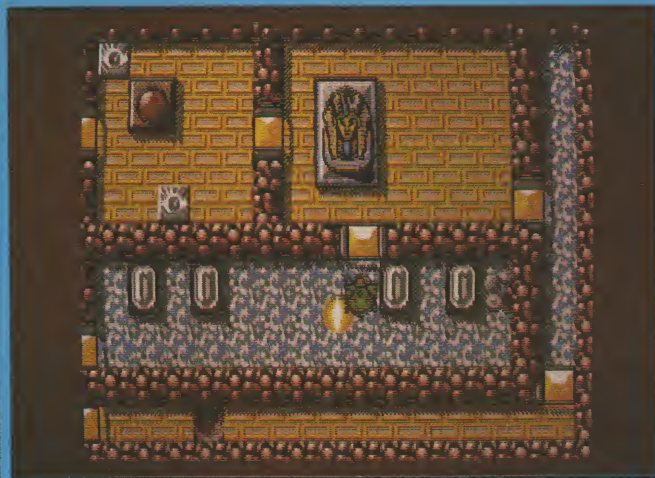
This cross between *Paradroid* and *Gauntlet* has been given the 16-Bit treatment and made even better thanks to some lovely graphics and tweaked gameplay.

The player takes the role of an apprentice Wizard who's hopping mad – he's accidentally turned himself into a frog. Rather than wait for an amphibian-kissing Princess to come along, he decides to enter a dungeon and

steal the Runes of Power hidden there, a task which requires him to dispatch the 12 Warlocks who dwell within. With the mission completed he returns to his happy human form...

The action is highly enjoyable and requires both thought and quick reflexes to survive. Although it's rather pricey, there's plenty of depth and should keep *Gauntlet* fans happy for some time.

OVERALL 79%



► Hewson's first 16-Bit venture is a slightly tweaked version of their popular *Gauntlet*-style arcade adventure, *Ranarama*.

TERRORPODS

Psygnosis, £24.95

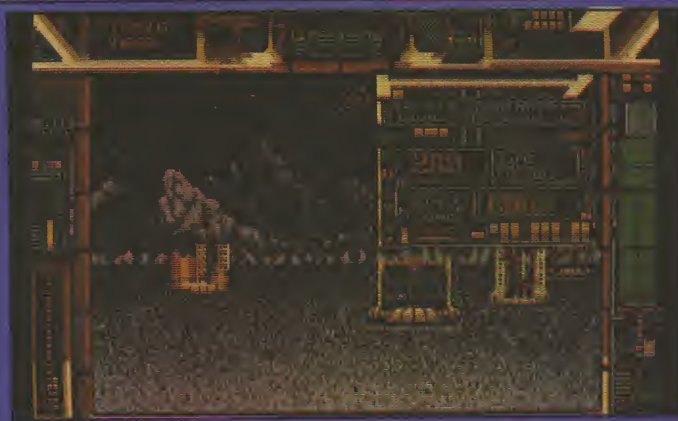
The asteroid 'Colian' holds a wealth of minerals and is mined by the Federation. All goes well until the evil Empire attacks and turns the place into a slave labour camp with the sole aim of producing the vital components of *Terrorpods* – the Empire's ultimate weapon.

Seeing this as a chance to learn the secrets of *Terrorpod* construction, the Federation plant an undercover agent in the complex, but the Empire find out their plans and decide to destroy the entire works and all its secrets.

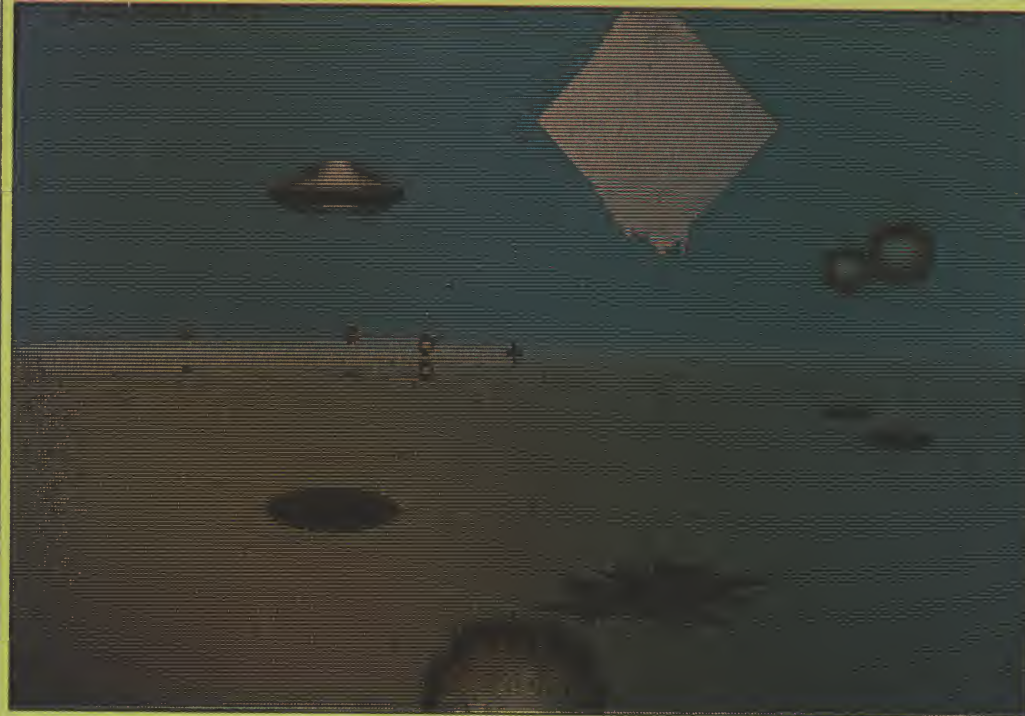
Taking the role of Federation agent, the player attempts to both defend and co-ordinate the running of all ten mining colonies, by trading the necessary minerals which each colony needs, and reconstructing units destroyed by the Empire.

Completing the game relies heavily on strategy as well as mindless blasting, the latter of which is accompanied with some great sampled effects. The graphics aren't bad and the game is engrossing, but the £25 price tag is a little on the steep side.

OVERALL 69%



► The smart, but slightly jerky, parallax backgrounds in *Terrorpods*



BACKLASH

Novagen, £19.95

Paul Mercenary Woakes' *Encounter* was released three and a half years ago, and quickly gathered a cult following. Now a 16-Bit sequel has arrived in the form of *Backlash*.

The first-person 3D action takes place on an alien desert, where weird aggressors fly in to attack your craft. In some situations there are so many things to avoid, blast and watch out for, it's almost overwhelming. The 3D effect is staggering, with beautifully detailed objects whizzing in and out of the screen at an awesome rate. The gameplay is truly dextral, and you get completely wrapped up with the action. Atari ST owners can rush out and buy it now – Amiga fans will have to wait until after Christmas.

OVERALL 92%

▲ Paul Woakes' 16-Bit version of *Encounter*. *Backlash* takes it a few steps further...

CHESSMASTER 2000

Electronic Arts, £24.95

Chess programs have been with us since the very advent of computer gaming, and now they've taken a new twist with Electronic Arts' *Chessmaster 2000*.

All the 'standard' chess program features are there, including twelve levels of difficulty, with five further options to modify play within those levels, take back a move, force the computer to move, and set up play. There are also several unusual features, including speech (with a very friendly sampled voice used on the

ST, and the standard built-in speech on the Amiga) and two modes of display; 2D 'newspaper' style or true 3D which, unlike other attempts, works extremely well. Other options allow the user to change the piece and board colours, load or save part finished games and display a phoney spreadsheet 'when the boss walks in'.

Chessmaster 2000 plays a very strong game, even on low levels, and the wealth of options and friendly speech make it highly enjoyable to play. If you're after an Amiga or ST chess game, this is definitely the one to buy.

OVERALL 86%



THE SENTINEL

Firebird, £19.95

Hailed by many as one of the most innovative pieces of software ever written, *The Sentinel* is now available in 16-Bit form. The gameplay is identical to the original 8-Bit versions, but the graphics are slightly clearer and

run much, much faster. There's also a new 'help' feature which allows the landscape to be viewed from far above, so that the player can see exactly where he is.

When ZZAP! reviewed *The Sentinel* last year it was felt that it was in a class of its own and defied ratings. We say the same about the new versions...

BARBARIAN

Psygnosis, £24.95

Not to be mixed up with Palace's namesake, this arcade adventure from Psygnosis puts the player into the role of Hegor the Barbarian.

After seeing his father brutally slain while battling a ferocious dragon, Hegor vows to destroy the monster. The story of Hegor is recounted in the 14-page booklet that accompanies the game, which carries on where the tale ends.

Hegor is icon controlled, and accessing each one with either the mouse or joystick allows the savage one to run, jump, pick up items, attack and defend, and if the battle isn't going to well, flee. Although appearing quite unwieldy, this system works

surprisingly well.

The loinclothed hero moves across each static screen until he reaches either edge. The screen then rapidly scrolls across to show the next location, in a sort of pseudo flick-screen style.

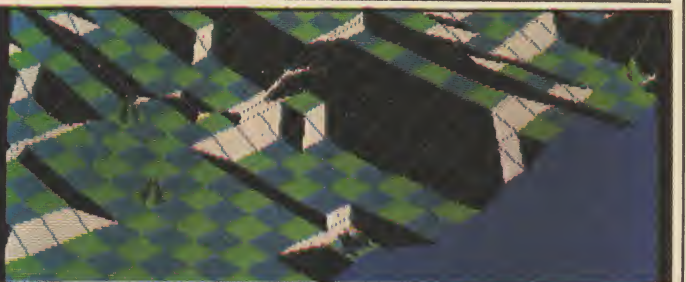
Graphically, the game is very smart, with good use of colour and a suitably earthy, primeval feel to it. Hegor and the inhabitants of this strange world are neatly drawn, although the animation is lacking polish.

Each time Hegor attempts a strenuous motion, a digitised grunt issues forth, and attacking monsters also let rip with some effective, guttural noises.

Barbarian has plenty of depth and should appeal to arcade adventurers who like a slice of action.

OVERALL 81%

► The first 16-Bit icon-controlled, bash 'em up arcade adventure, *Barbarian*



ZAP! READERS

GAMES TOP 30

1 (3) THE LAST NINJA (16%)
System 3

2 (4) WIZBALL (9%)
Ocean

3 (8) BARBARIAN (8%)
Palace

4 (-) BUBBLE BOBBLE (7%)
Firebird

5 (2) LEADERBOARD (5%)
US Gold/Access

6 (1) WORLD GAMES (5%)
US Gold/Epyx

7 (11) WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD (4%)
US Gold/Access

8 (5) GAUNTLET (3%)
US Gold

9 (16) CALIFORNIA GAMES (2%)
US Gold/Epyx

10 (7) ELITE (2%)
Firebird

11 (9) URIDIUM
Hewson

12 (17) KIKSTART II
Mastertronic

13 (10) THE SENTINEL
Firebird

14 (12) GUNSHIP
Microprose

15 (6) DELTA
Thalamus

16 (18) DEFENDER OF THE CROWN
Mirrorsoft

17 (13) SANXION
Thalamus

18 (15) HEAD OVER HEELS
Ocean

19 (-) ZYNAPS
Hewson

20 (19) MERCENARY
Novagen

21 (20) NEMESIS
Konami

22 (27) ROAD RUNNER
US Gold

23 (21) I,BALL
Firebird

24 (-) BOULDERDASH
Prism

25 (14) PAPERBOY
Elite

26 (22) INTO THE EAGLE'S NEST
Pandora

27 (26) STAR PAWS
Software Projects

28 (24) GREEN BERET
Imagine

29 (-) MEGA APOCALYPSE
Martech

30 (-) RENEGADE
Ocean



MUSIC TOP 10

1 (3) DELTA (36%)

Thalamus
Main Theme – Rob Hubbard

2 (1) SANXION (12%)

Thalamus
Loading Music – Rob Hubbard

3 (4) THE LAST NINJA (9%)

System 3
Title Tune – Ben Daglish

4 (-) MEGA APOCALYPSE (7%)

Martech
Main Theme – Rob Hubbard

5 (7) WIZBALL (6%)

Ocean
Main Theme – Martin Galway

6 (2) GREEN BERET (5%)

Imagine
Loading Music – Martin Galway

7 (5) I,BALL (4%)

Firebird
Main Theme – Rob Hubbard

8 (6) ARKANOID (2%)

Imagine
Title Tune – Martin Galway

9 (10) GAME OVER (2%)

Imagine
Title Tune – Martin Galway

10 (8) FLASH GORDON (2%)

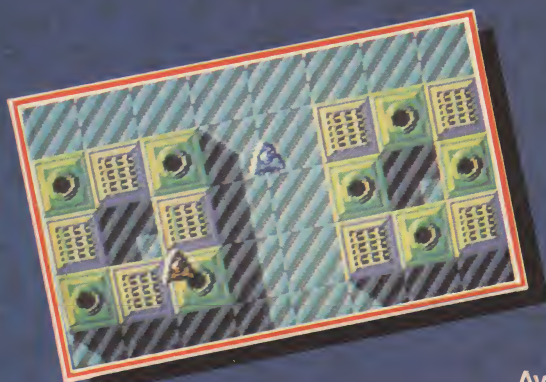
MAD
Main Theme – Rob Hubbard

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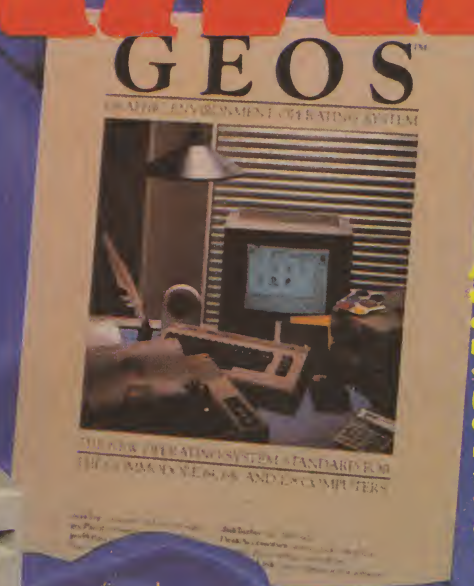
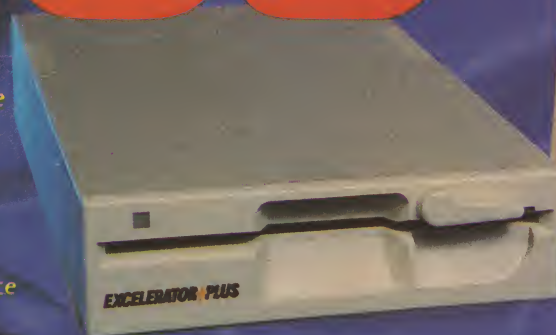
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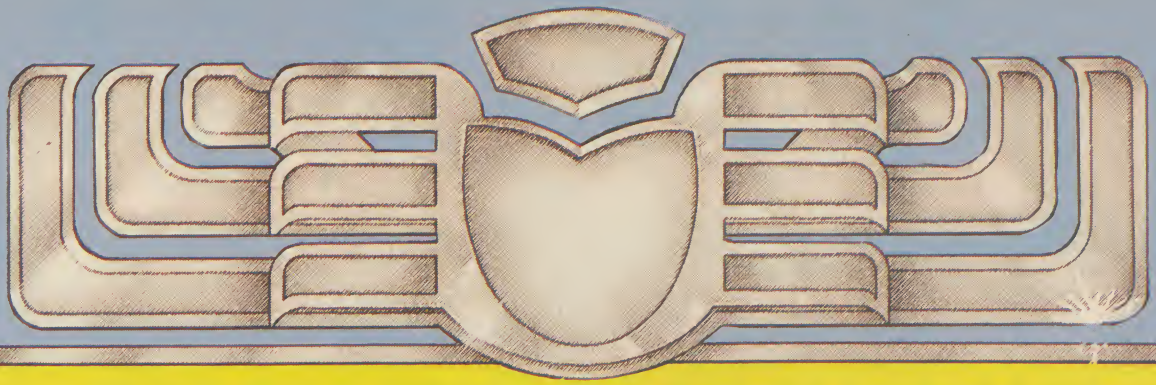
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COMPETITION

To celebrate the launch of Firebird's new up-market £2.99 budget label, Telecomsoft have decided to give away THE ENTIRE Firebird 199 Silver Range to the lucky winner.

There are also ten runners-up prizes of five of the latest releases of their choice. The first prize includes normally out-of-stock games and could tot up to well over 40 titles – so, if you fancy owning the definitive Firebird budget collection, read on.

Listed below are five anagrams of famous Firebird one ninety-niners. All

- 1) FANS OF NICE BRAVES
- 2) HANDY BHAGEE RIVER
- 3) AH, KIRLY PODS
- 4) NIKKY THE SNOG-WIG
- 5) TOWN WATER PILL

you have to do is unscramble the letters to reveal the correct title. Simple eh?

Put your answers on a postcard, or the back of a sealed envelope and whizz your entries to us at: **FIREBIRD FORTY BUDGET COMP, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB**, to arrive no later than the tenth day in the month of December, this year.

Names, addresses, telephone numbers, blah, blah, blah. You know the routine. Get cracking!

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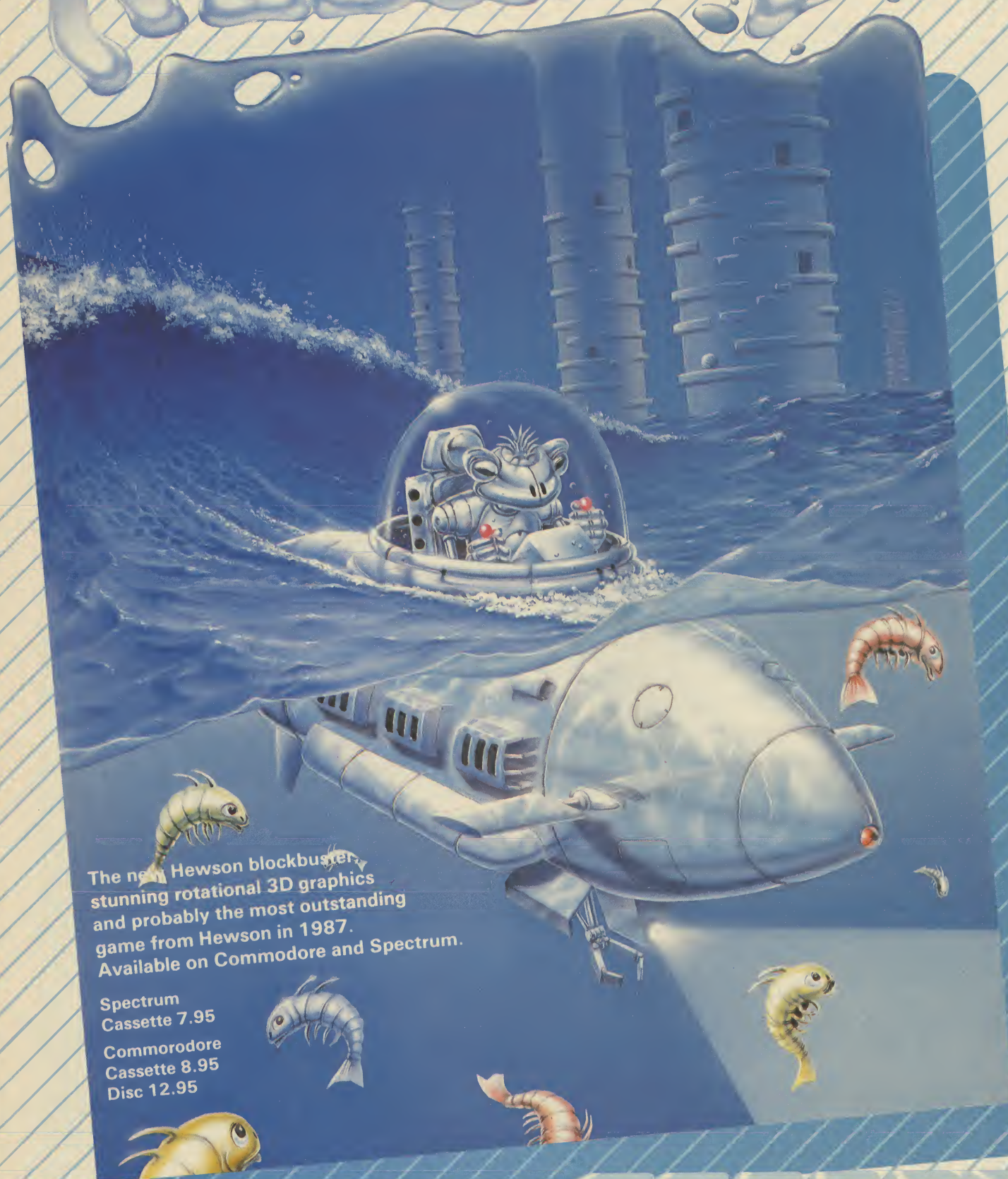
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WINNERS!



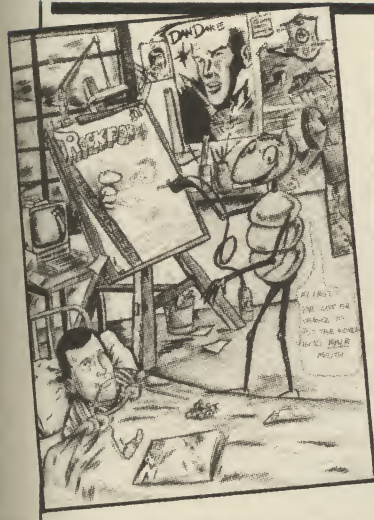
...Results...

FOREVER BLOWING BUBBLES

Firebird's fabulous *Bubble Bubble* arcade machine competition stirred up an incredible amount of interest as readers sent in their designs for the side of a Bubble Bobble arcade machine.

The competition was run across both ZZAP! and CRASH, and we're pleased to say that a ZZAP! reader – **Matt Lyon** of Hampshire, RG22 5RH – is the very lucky winner. Congratulations Matt! A fabulous *Bubble Bobble* arcade machine is all yours!

There are also 25 runners up prizes of a copy of the game – the lucky winners are...



THOSE WITH AN ARTISTIC BENT

Rainbird were so pleased with their *Advanced OCP Art Studio* that they offered an airbrush complete with hose, three cans of propellant, a set of ten airbrushing inks and a copy of *OCP Art Studio* to the reader who could draw the best picture of Rockford in his studio. Our favourite was sent in by **W A Chetwynd**, Warks, CV10 0DR. There are also ten runners-up prizes of copies of the *Art Studio*, which are claimed by...

Nial Quee, N. Ireland, BT19 1DD; Stephen A Graham, Cumbria, CA2 7QB; Aten Skinner, Orpington, Kent; Clive Bevan, Gwent, NP4 0EY; David Knox, Scotland, EH165HQ; Peter Skelton, Northern Ireland, BT21 0PQ; Danny Blom, Birmingham, B15 2NG; Hayden Duvall, Merseyside, WA11 9JY; Peter Cummings, Ripley, Derbys, DE5 8JF; John Haigh, South Yorks, S71 1XA.

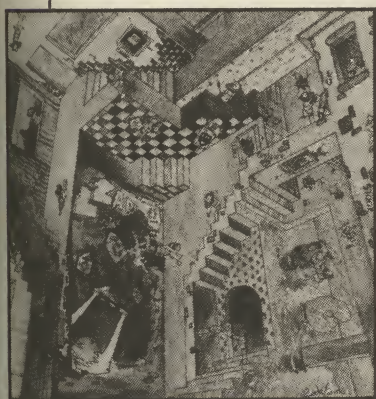
STREAKY MEAN

In preparation for the release of their futuristic motorcycling game, *Mean Streak*, Mirrorsoft decided to offer an adventure day out with the ZZAP! team for five people. Those lucky (or unlucky, however you view it) are **Simon Taylor**, Leics, LE7 7PX; **Spencer Torr**, Beds, MK44 3JP; **Steven Francis**, Essex, SS11 8NA; **Jamie Dunning**, Cornwall, PL15 8HN and **Kevin Burton**, Southampton, SO4 4FL.

Fifty runners-up each receive a specially made *Mean Streak* key fob. They are...

Philip Wynn, Lancashire, WN8 9BD; **Ian Lowe**, Surrey, KT9 2EY; **Nicholas Lee**, Cambs, PE17 3SR; **S B Woods**, Goole, DN14 9QD; **Paul Dorritt**, Elizabeth Barracks, BFPO 29; **Mark Ratcliff**, Kent, CT4 5DH; **Graham Taylor**, Oxon, OX8 7EW; **N Reynolds**, Surrey, KT9 1XQ; **T Y Barlow**, West Yorkshire, WF5 9RB; **Richard Sykes**, West Yorkshire, BD16 1LB; **Stephen Keach**, Warwicks, CV12 9PU; **Paul Taplin**, Derby, DE3 2HS; **Mark Taylor**, South Glamorgan, CF6 5AH; **Scott Graten**, Tyne and Wear, NG25 8RE; **Lawrence Bowyer**, Berkshire, RG7 3NN; **Jason Baker**, Kent, CT1 1TS; **Michael Dutton**, Birmingham, B33 8EQ; **Sebastian James**, Powys, LD6

2HL; **Phil Yard**, Surrey, CR20BN; **Philip Ruxton**, Essex, CO3 3SD; **Daren Parr**, Notts, NG16 6QW; **Justin Mallinson**, Nottingham, NG13 8SP; **Gary Smith**, Notts., NG9 1QA; **Robert Dilks**, Notts, NG9 4DL; **David Horton**, West Midlands, WV6 0TQ; **Nichola Cobner**, Gwent, NP44 5AF; **Neil Stewart**, Glasgow, G41 4DF; **Robert Macintyre**, Cheshire, SK8 3AT; **Matthew Kibby**, Bristol, BS19 2RG; **A Marshall**, Merseyside, L35 0PQ; **James Witney**, Lincs, LN13 9QS; **Mr C D Lloyd**, Hereford, HR4 7EN; **Stephen Downey**, Northern Ireland, BT14; **Daniel Taylor**, Leics, LE6 1LB; **R Wallman**, Surrey, RH7 6QF; **Thomas R Macdonald**, Lanarkshire, ML7 5AR; **Russell Ayres**, Bristol, BS6 5AN; **Michael James Brown**, West Yorkshire, WF5 0QD; **Anthony Goddard**, Oxford, OX2 7TE; **Barry Bolton**, Billingham, TS23 1DW; **Alasdair MacLeod**, Isle of Lewis, PA37 2HB; **Jason Taylor**, West Midlands, WV12 5AR; **R Marshall**, Merseyside, L35 0PQ; **Andrew Sharp**, South Yorkshire, DN5 8PJ; **A J O'Donovan**, Hampshire, SO2 4BQ; **Zzap! Reader**, Oxon, RG9 5AR; **Shouma Khan**, Lancs, BL5 2QP; **Terje Hansen**, Kongsberg, Norway; **Barry McKay**, Surrey, RH6 9RP; **Simon Bell**, Worcs, DY10 3YU.



ARCADE RENEGADE

Back in Issue 30 we ran the 'I want to be a Renegade' comp. All you had to do to win an amazing Renegade briefcase arcade machine and monitor was to answer a few simple questions...

and the first person out of the bag was **Jozef Pierlejewski** of Manchester, M31 2QZ. Congratulations Jozef, the machine is currently winging its way to your house!

CHART VOTING DRAW WINNERS

WINNER (£40 worth of software plus ZZAP! T-Shirt): **D M Edwards**, Sutton Coldfield B74 3HS

RUNNERS UP (ZZAP! T-Shirt and Cap): **Wari Orumbie**, London SE15, N Prichard, Sutton Coldfield, B72 1AT, **Murray Reid**, Chester, CH4 7RJ, **Mat Eastmond**, Amersham, HP6 5LB

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- Amstrad 'Smooth Scroll'.



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HAVE A DIG AT WINNING YOUR VERY OWN TREASURE TROVE – COURTESY OF US GOLD

Missing out on Sizzler-dom by the merest fraction last issue, US Gold's *Solomon's Key* is a brilliantly addictive platform puzzle game. The friendly chaps from Birmingham have agreed to stump up **THREE** Gold Sovereigns (valued around the £300 mark) for the lucky chap or lady that manages to locate the hidden treasure on the map below. Have a look at the *Solomon's Key* room and, using your judgement and knowledge of foot-balling conditions, place a single 'X' where you think the treasure is most likely to be hidden.

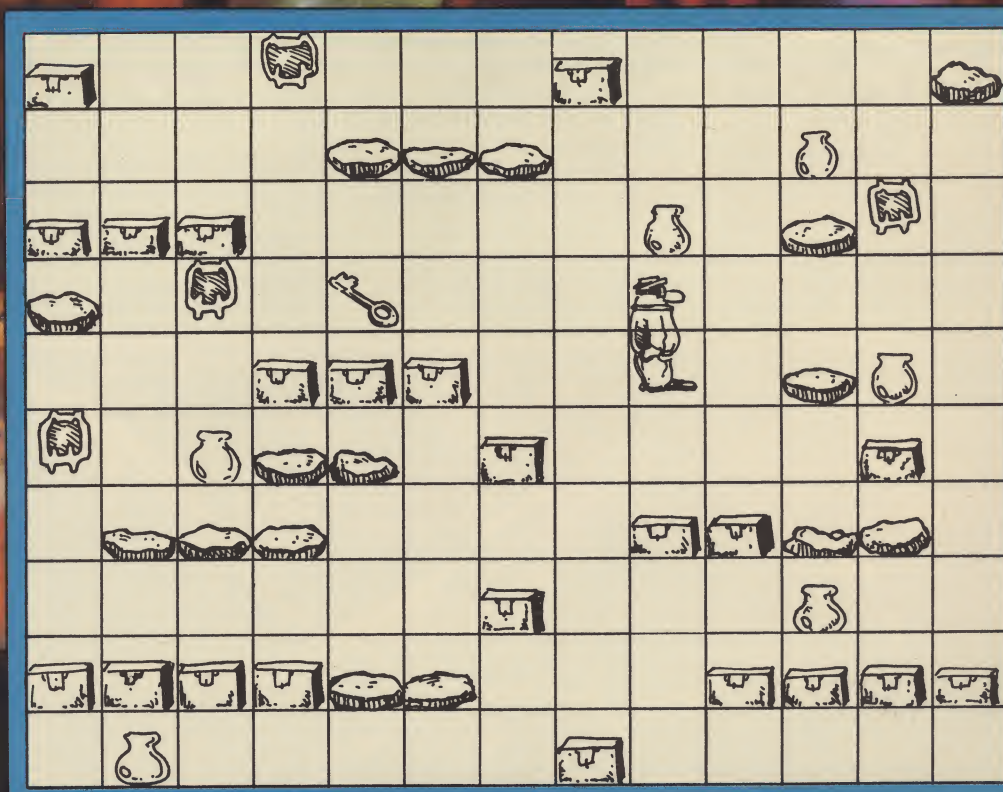
The entry which has its mark closest to that positioned by our panel of experts(?) will walk off with the goodies, plus a copy of the game. 25 runners-up will also win the 64 version of *Solomon's Key* for their troubles.

Place your entry (or a suitable copy) in an envelope and send it to: **SOLOMON'S SOVEREIGNS COMP, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB**, to arrive no later than 10 December.

Don't forget to include some sort of name, address and phone number if possible.

Happy 'X'-ing.

ZZAP! COMP



THE SOFTWARE INDEX

ALIENS (Electric Dreams)

420,850 Tony Jones, Aberchirder, Aberdeen
143,500 Paresh Solanki, Forest Gate, London
126,500 Paul Griffiths, Llandudno, N Wales

ALLEYKAT (Hewson)

14,582,700 Jean-Claude Zeh, Hoenheim, France
9,334,400 Richard Hudson, Copmanthorpe, York
8,917,300 Tony Shoreman, Billington, Lancs

ANTIRIAD (Palace Software)

Completed in . . .
3:06 M Gooday, Bishop's Stortford, Herts
3:12 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks
3:40 Damian Boocock, Colne, Lancs

ARKANOID (Imagine)

1,378,040 Falco, Cleethorpes, S Humberside
1,262,190 Jonathon Webb, Highbridge, Somerset
1,003,560 Steve Tye, Kidderminster, Worcs

ARMOURDILLO (Code Masters)

29,300 Adie Griffiths, Crowborough, E Sussex
25,800 Andrew Bury, Kingswinford, W mids
22,800 P Griffiths, Llandudno, N Wales

AUF WIEDERSEHEN MONTY (Gremlin Graphics)

51,223 Casey Gallacher, Swallowfield, Reading
29,478 Alex Montague-Smith, Trowbridge, Wilts
18,000 Sanjay Vaghela, Rugby, Warks

BARBARIAN (Palace Software)

160,000 Paul Griffiths, Llandudno, N Wales
57,600 Stephen Simpson, Otley, W Yorks
44,450 Colin Box, Doncaster, S Yorks

BEAMRIDER (Activision)

980,420 Steve Jarratt, ZZAP! Towers
642,704 Michael Sung, Peterlee, Co Durham
272,174 Steve Tye, Kidderminster, Worcs

BMX SIMULATOR (Codemasters)

6,285 Barry Mills, Denny, Scotland
4,420 Jap, Ettingshall Park, Wolverhampton
4,260 Adrian Broadley, Manby, Lincs

BREAKTHRU (US Gold)

246,000 Vincent Old, Wellingborough, Northants
138,050 Paul Gibson, Sunderland, Tyne And Wear
111,900 Gary Rice, Colchester, Essex

BULLDOG (Gremlin Graphics)

2,238,200 Gary Footitt, Droylsden, Manchester
2,185,900 Peter Walker, Adelaide, S Australia
1,825,700 Roger Alexandersson, Goteborg, Sweden

COBRA (Ocean)

285,900 Philip Stevens, Alfreton, Derbyshire
93,400 Patrick Green, Burnley, Lancs
89,200 Stephen Wildridge, Great Sutton, S Wirral

CRYSTAL CASTLES (US Gold)

677,992 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers
668,995 Richard Hardbattle, Nuneaton, Warks
652,127 Iain Davidson, Dumfries, Scotland

DECATHLON (Firebird)

12,255 D Rice, Southgate, London
11,599 Steve Tye, Kidderminster, Worcs
11,068 Stephen Simpson, Otley, W Yorks

DECEPTOR (US Gold)

27,050 Steven King, Plymouth, Devon
13,510 Trenoy Gaetan, Brussels, Belgium

DEFENDER OF THE CROWN (Mirrorsoft)

Completed by:
May 1200, Henrik Sylow, Arhus, Denmark
March 1201, Van Crombrugge Bart, Antwerp, Belgium

DELTA (Thalamus)

1,992,579 Michael Aubert, Exeter, Devon
1,258,430 Colin Redfern, Heywood, Lancs
972,636 Andrew Simmonds, E Studdal, Kent

DRAGON'S LAIR (Software Projects)

63,997 Sean Walker (Runsoft), Melbourne, Australia
36,642 Simon Cole's Mum, Chelmsford, Essex
33,750 Simon Cole, Chelmsford, Essex

DUET (Elite)

174,290 Steven Atkinson, Oldham, Lancs
168,170 Fu Sang Li, Crewe, Cheshire
159,110 Gary Smith, Basingstoke, Hants

ESCAPE FROM SINGE'S CASTLE (Software Projects)

104,800 Leon White, Consett, Co Durham
92,742 Craig Knight, Keyworth, Notts
88,588 Steven Atkinson, Oldham, Lancs

EXPRESS RAIDER (US Gold)

68,450 Gavin Shute, Aylesbury, Bucks
60,600 Dean Ferguson, Gillingham, Kent
49,500 Bharat Vaghela, Rugby, Warks

THE EQUALIZER (The Power House)

20,620 Dean Stinton, Botley, Southampton
14,850 Jonathan Richards, Attleborough, Warks
13,120 Graeme Crichton, Irvine, Ayrshire

FIRELORD (Hewson)

145,205 Richard Pargeter, Coventry, W Mids
143,160 Daniel Osbourne, Hornsea, N Humbs
116,805 Damian Ward, Harrogate, W Yorks

FIRETRACK (Electric Dreams)

835,640 Darren Cole, Chingford, London
664,960 Kristian Bruun, Copenhagen, Denmark
527,290 Johnny Larsen, Copenhagen, Denmark

FIST II (Melbourne House)

1,753,000 Steven Rolf, Kettering, Northants
1,560,800 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks
1,220,000 Steven Guilfoyle, Oldham

GALIVAN (Imagine)

293,000 Steven Ward, Doncaster, S Yorks
287,000 Chris McLean, Helsby, Cheshire

GAME OVER (Imagine)

99,400 Mike Thomas, Caerphilly, Wales

GAUNTLET - DEEPER DUNGEONS (US Gold)

Merlin The Wizard
8,787,195 Asher Rashid, Thornaby, Cleveland
4,350,297 Paul Cashley, Bishopston, Bristol
4,308,061 Michael Robertson, Stirlingshire, Scotland

Thor The Warrior

4,678,932 David Taylor, Alvington, Glos
3,974,521 Paul Cashley, Bishopston, Bristol
3,232,197 Dean Thomas, Powys, Wales

Questor the Elf

8,746,238 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks
2,497,341 Paul Cashley, Bishopston, Bristol

Thyra the Valkyrie

6,416,327 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks
818,692 Paul Hollington, Hullbridge, Essex

GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS (Elite)

920,800 Casey Gallacher, Swallowfield, Reading
531,890 Christian Major, Norwich, Norfolk
456,060 Chris Goodswen, Norwich, Norfolk

GUNSHIP (Microprose)

278,785 Richard Mellor, Bridgewater, Somerset
271,835 Mark Slavin, Leadgate, Co Durham
265,990 David Nicol, Heworth, York

HADES NEBULA (Nexus)

383,200 David Theys, Schilde, Belgium

HEAD OVER HEELS (Ocean)

88,620 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks
88,140 Richard Lunn, Leeds, W Yorks
88,140 Robert Bowe, Otford, Kent

HERCULES (Alpha/Omega)

1,159,880 Thomas Broers, Lundflata, Norway
999,870 Rob Evans, Tring, Herts
911,300 Steven Boswell, Telford, Shropshire

HERO (Firebird)

197,852 Lawson Davies, Pencoed, S Wales
177,762 Patrick Lammers, 1400 Nivelles, Belgium
174,049 Paul Morrison, Consett, Co Durham

I,BALL (Firebird)

104,040 Marc Johnson, Broughton, Chester
51,600 Stephen Raggett, Westbourne Pk, London
50,854 Mark Andrews, Netherton, W Mids

INTO THE EAGLE'S NEST (Pandora)

2,186,800 Guy Gilding, Slough, Berks
1,637,600 Peter Reilly, Bury-St-Edmunds, Suffolk
1,143,300 M Booman, Oud-Beijerland, The Netherlands

IRIDIS ALPHA (Llamasoft)

599,760 George Bray, Armthorpe, Doncaster
349,520 Colin Redfern, Heywood, Lancs
204,390 Jonathan Wood, Edgeware, Middx

JAILBREAK (Konami)

356,500 C Mitchell, Petersfield, Hants
195,500 Paul Gibson, Sunderland, Tyne And Wear
102,500 Malcolm Redfern, Preston, Lancs

JEEP COMMAND (Bug Byte)

518,550 G Meusen, 2230 Schilde, Belgium
303,990 J Gheorghisor (Runsoft), Melbourne, Australia
250,350 Dave Breed, Cullercoats, Tyne & Wear

KNUCKLEBUSTERS (Melbourne House)

11,700 Craig Bent, Failsforth, Manchester
6,300 Steve Quinell, New Eltham, London
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21,184,770 Michael Eikmans, The Netherlands
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311,700 Louis Farnham, Twickenham, Middlesex

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14,898 Stuart Scattergood, Address not included
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63,200 Adam Beabies, Tarbolton, Ayrshire
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996,130 Steven Atkinson, Oldham, Lancs
995,610 Jonathan Edge, Waverton, Cheshire

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910,900 Les Ozouets, St Peter Port, Guernsey
362,431 Neil Ridley, E Leigh, Hants

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2,470,584 Marc Hodge, Selby, N Yorks
1,405,220 Greg Murphy, Moreton, Wirral

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131,020 Jonathan Richards, Attleborough, Warks

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282,860 Paul Dunstan, High Wycombe, Bucks
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2,655,200 Alan Smith, Glenrothes, Fife
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\$2,789,600 Gareth Mitchell, Mirfield, W Yorks
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137,560 Cleveland Gibbon, Erdington, W Mids

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287,140 Ove Knudsen, 5033 Fyllingsdaleu, Norway
273,667 Per Kjellander, Stenungsund, Sweden

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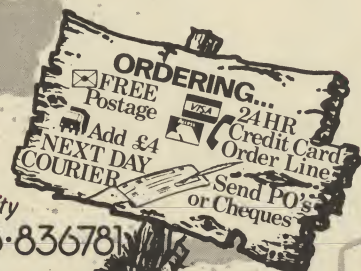
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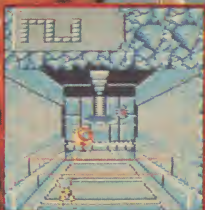
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CHEAP AND CHEERFUL

ZZAP!'s monthly round-up of budget software

New recruit, Dan Gilbert (who arrived too late to be introduced in this month's editorial) casts a fresh, but sharp eye over the latest batch of budget bargains. Take it away Mr Giblet...

BEACH HEAD II

Americana, £2.99

This classic Sizzler was first reviewed way back in Issue 4 and was awarded 90%. Now US Gold have given it a new lease of life by releasing it on their budget label, Americana.

The plot concerns a Dictator who has captured allied soldiers and is holding them prisoner on his remote island. A crack squad of commandos is sent to their rescue.

Beach Head II is played three ways: one player takes the role of either the Dictator or leader of the assault team, or two players battle it out simultaneously in a head-to-head.

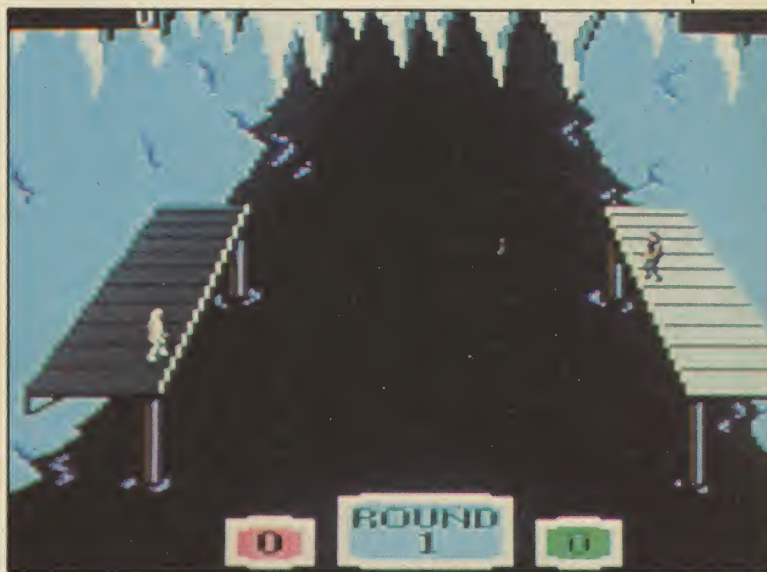
The action is played over four independently loaded scenes. The first is 'Attack', where the com-

mando team is parachuted in by helicopter. The Dictator controls a machine gun and blasts the soldiers as they rush down the screen. Next comes 'Rescue' where the Dictator's forces are used to kill captives before they escape the prison.

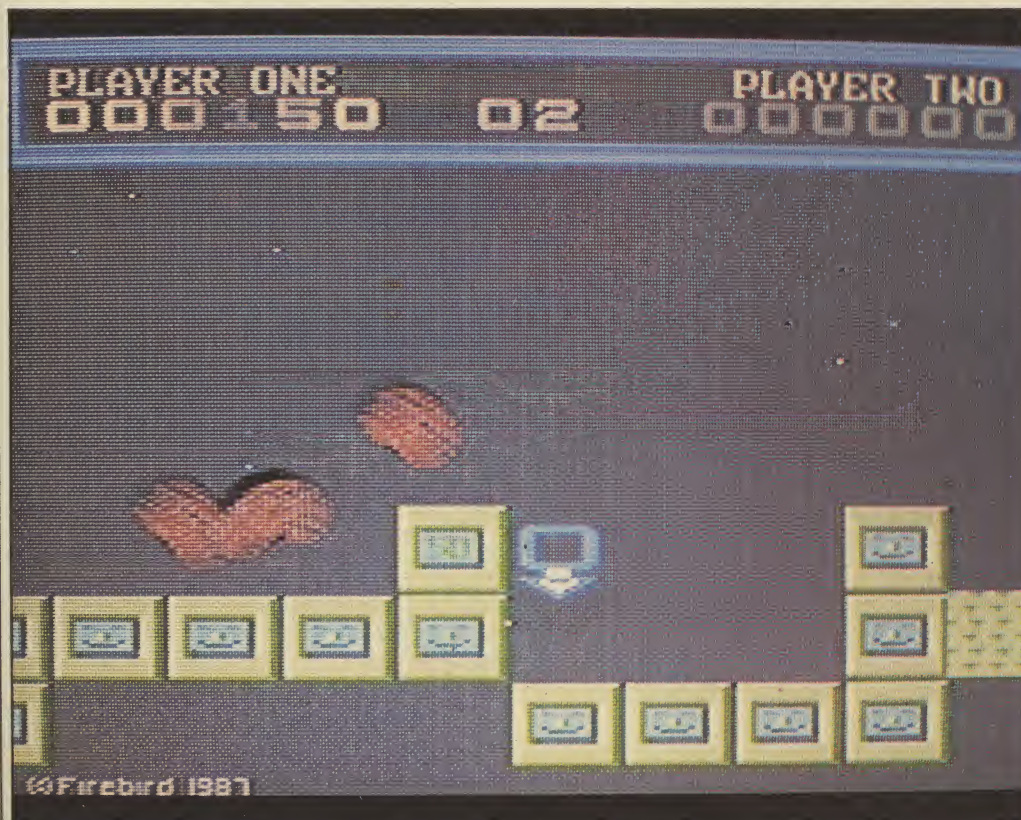
If the prisoners are rescued, they're flown by helicopter up a 3D vertically scrolling screen. The Dictator's army is out in force again, this time to blow the 'chopper out of the sky before it reaches safety. Finally, there's a thrilling knife fight between the Dictator and the leader of the commando team, and there can be only one survivor...

Beach Head II is simply superb, and boasts some lovely graphics and a huge range of sampled voices. The gameplay is very bloody, but extremely enjoyable, and at the price it's a steal.

OVERALL 94%



► Fill in the holes and let the cutesie Blob family bounce their way to the end of the screen



HYBER BLOB

Firebird, £2.99

In this oddity from Firebird, one or two players attempt to keep a group of blobpods, small leaping faces, constantly moving from left to right along a horizontally scrolling landscape comprised of blocks. This sounds a little on the simplistic side, but the pods must always bounce on solid ground – when a gap is reached they fall off the bottom of the screen and die.

The action is controlled with a cursor, which picks up blocks from one part of the landscape and drops them over gaps in another. As well as avoiding gaps, there are killer blocks (which vaporise when a blobpod passes over), immovable blocks (which speak for themselves), and mutant blobpods (which eat blocks away) to watch out for. To add a little more pressure, the task of moving all the blobpods from the left side of the 'squarescape' to the right is played against a time limit!

Although *Hyber Blob* is great fun to play, and gets very challenging later on, there's little variety in the gameplay – consequently some players may become bored rather quickly. If you like reaction games which require plenty of very quick thinking though, try it out.

OVERALL 80%



BUDGET TEST



ON-COURT TENNIS

Firebird Silver, £1.99

Tennis simulations aren't that common these days, so this Activision re-release is quite notable.

There are a decent set of options, including a choice of three surfaces, the chance to play the best of three or five sets, four different computer opponents and two player or demo modes. The

control allows a wide variety of shots, from smashes and lobs to slices and hard topspins. Service is also very realistic, with similarly varied options.

Having said how close to the real thing this is, it is also just as difficult to play, and it can be infuriating when, for instance, the ball bounces under your racket. Sports fans should give this a look, but I think the gameplay might well prove a little too frustrating for the average user.

OVERALL 75%

MICROBALL

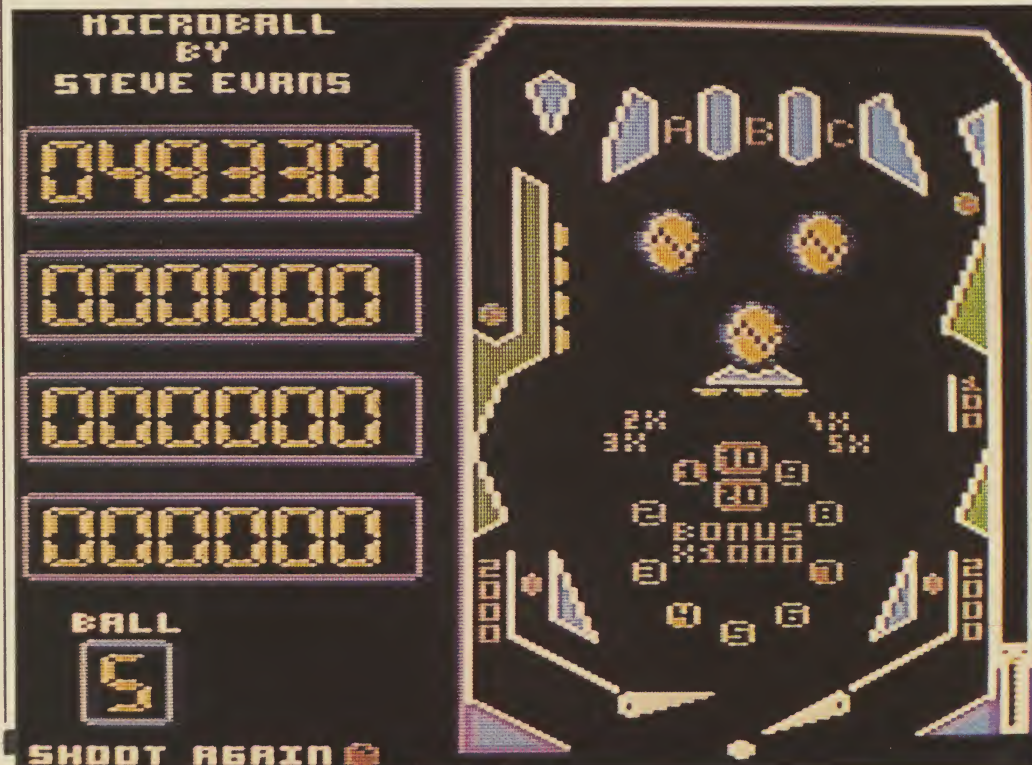
Alternative Software, £1.99

Microball is a pinball simulation written by Steve Evans, author of *Guardian*. Between one and four players each have five balls with which to register the highest score. The table is fairly basic table, and features shoot targets,

magnets, a bonus tube and roll-overs.

The gameplay isn't brilliant, with none-too-realistic gravity and very digital flippers (that is, they only have two positions). Compared to the what now aging *Pinball Construction Set* is capable of producing, the play is bland, and even

► Be a pinball wizard for two quid – with Steve Evans' *Microball*



PIRATES IN HYPERSPACE

Alternative Software, £1.99

In this budget shoot 'em up, the player takes the part of a space pirate intent on pillaging an immensely valuable microscopic life form. To achieve this end, he tackles a heavily armed fleet of 21 cargo ships, boards them one at a time and steals their precious substance from under robot guard.

The action is played over three stages. The first is a vertically scrolling shooting section where the player battles through fleets of

guard ships. Occasionally, energising stars appear and are picked up when run into. When three stars are collected, an assault on the cargo ship is undertaken. The ship in question appears at the top of the screen and shoots fireballs while the attacker registers as many hits as possible. If enough hits are sustained, the ship is boarded and searched.

The fast and furious gameplay is sometimes a little rough, with disappointingly monochromatic graphics and very limited sound. Having said that, it's fairly playable, and has enough appeal to make it a reasonable buy.

OVERALL 58%



► Choose the ship you would most like to be blown to bits in

dedicated pinball fanatics will find it ultimately tiresome.

OVERALL 73%

SUNBURST

Rack-it, £1.99

Rack-it's release this month is a multi-directionally scrolling space shoot 'em up which centres around a series of star systems, each with a huge sun at its centre.

The first system, a bubble-like alien environment, is home to a vicious race of beasts – spinners, phantoms and octopods to name but a few – who home in on the player's ship, depleting its energy on contact. If too many hits are sustained the vessel is destroyed.

The aim is to survive attacks from these aliens and to destroy the carriers, a species that transports energy around the system. Blasting these leaves a decaying energy pod that remains intact for 10 seconds. When enough pods have been collected, as displayed on an energy meter, the ship is guided into the sun, which vaporises. With the mission accomplished, the player moves onto the next, more difficult level.

Sunburst is very smart looking game with brilliant scrolling backdrops and some really neat sprites. The gameplay is a touch repetitive however, and is also marred by some dodgy collision detection – the ship sometimes explodes without touching anything. Entertaining for a while, but doomed to end up gathering dust on the software shelf.

OVERALL 67%

FIREBIRD



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INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM

US Gold £9.99 cass, £11.99 disk, joystick or keys

Indiana Jones is back: Fedora donned, stubble designed, and whip cracked, ready for more heroic deeds in US Gold's latest arcade conversion.

The player is given control of the legendary adventurer as he travels to India in pursuit of the Sankara stone, stolen from the remote vil-

lage of Mayapore by the Maharaja. Once protected by this artifact, the town now lies devastated. The thoroughly nasty Maharajah has made his palace into a worshipping ground for the Thuggee death cult, and has the village children working down his gem mines.

In the first of three screens, Indy travels through the platform-like mine caverns, climbing ladders and crossing narrow passages in search of caged children. Pressing fire makes his whip lash out, which kills snakes and forces pursuing Thuggee guards off the platforms. Constant lashing is vital to Indy's survival, as contact with a guard or snake results in a loss of one of his five lives. If a cage is found, a crack of the whip breaks the lock and frees the imprisoned child.

Having released all seven children, Jones escapes down the mineshaft to level two. Here, he hurtles down the diagonally scrolling train track in a mine car, which is tilted left and right to avoid broken rails or change lanes to avoid dead-ends.

Having survived the course, Indy enters the final level – the Temple of Doom. To finish the screen he retrieves the Sankara stone from a statue of Kali, the goddess of death. The stone lies in the middle of a lava pit and is reached by negotiating a moving bridge.

Should the stone be recovered, Jones re-enters the first level (albeit with different layout) to begin a second adventure. Once three



stones have been collected, a rope bridge is reached, and Indy escapes to safety.



I never liked the original arcade game that much – the gameplay is very weak, and

once you've seen the brilliant graphics and heard the amazing sampled speech there's little incentive to put any more money in the machine. On the 64 you haven't got the speech and graphics capabilities, so you're left with a very simple three level game. None of the screens are challenging, and it only takes a few goes to master them. The worst thing of all is that more time is spent battling the unwieldy loading system than playing the actual game – which is very frustrating indeed. When you look at some of the original games around this month, like SEUCK, Zig Zag and Nebulus, it makes you wonder whether there's any point in pouring money into non-starter projects like these.



What's happened to my favourite hero? The less than brilliant coin-op has been

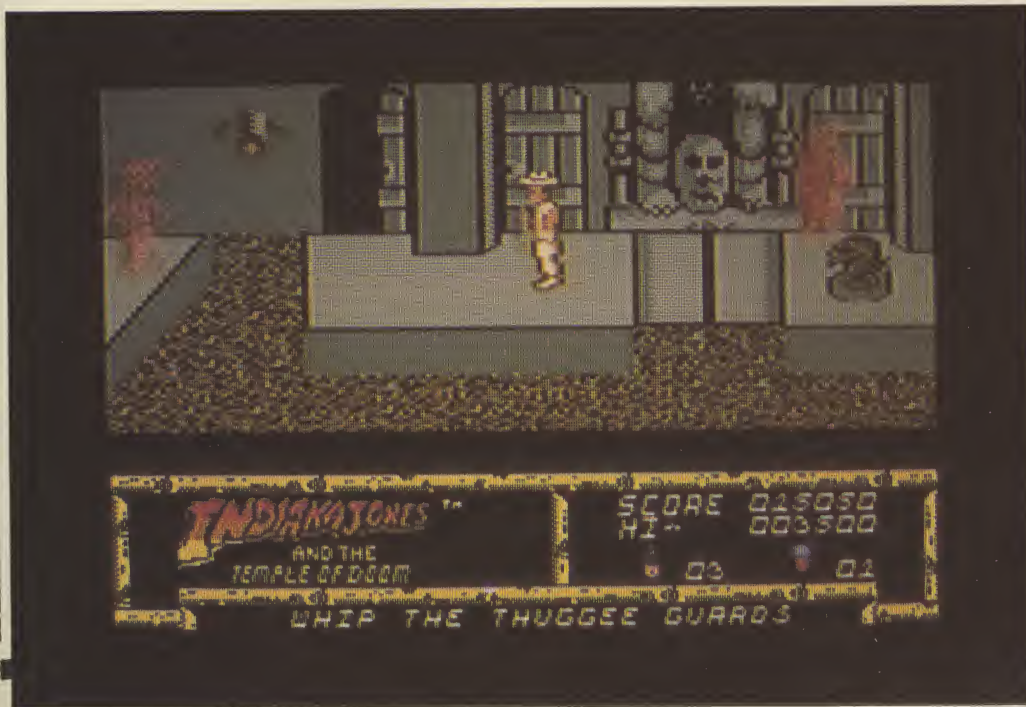
converted in all its supposed glory to create an even less brilliant 64 game. Graphically, the second stage is the worst, with badly drawn and variably-sized rail cars whizzing along tracks of dubious perspective. Indiana makes like 'Automan', achieving sharp angled turns with unbelievable efficiency. There are so many niggling points: the unintelligent collision detection, poor animation, the dire soundtrack and, possibly the worst, a multiload system that loads in level one even when you've just died on it. It's all there in memory, but just to make sure, the program loads it all in again. Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom should be called Indiana Jones in the Program of Doom...



The stunning loading picture of Indy gives rise to high expectations. However,

hopes are soon dashed when you start playing. The action is unbelievably frustrating, and the effectiveness of the whip seems to vary from second to second. The 'depth' of platforms doesn't register and you hit objects four feet away simply because you pass behind them – the collision detection between sprites is equally dodgy. The tune rapidly irritates, and the gameplay becomes very repetitive once the correct routes are known. To cap it all, there's a really pathetic multiload system to break up the action. Save your money for something more interesting.

► Indy arrives at the Statue of Kali, in the depths of the Temple of Doom



PRESENTATION 38%

A very clumsy multiload system, and no options.

GRAPHICS 44%

The loading screen is the graphical highlight – the rest of the game is a jumble of poorly animated sprites and inept backdrops.

SOUND 39%

An abysmal rendition of the soundtrack drones along, supplemented by weak effects.

HOOKABILITY 46%

Initially spoiled by niggling weak spots in the gameplay, and the intrusive multiload only serves to further dampen the enthusiasm.

LASTABILITY 35%

Learning all the routes shouldn't take too long, but even this may prove too frustrating for some.

OVERALL 41%

A startlingly unimpressive arcade conversion.

ZIG ZAG

Mirrorsoft, £9.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick only

● Incredible 3D action in Tony Crowther's latest and greatest game

The year is 2000-and-a-bit AD and the setting is the 12th Dimension School of Star Flight. A pupil is faced with the ultimate test: fly through the Matrix of Zog – a bewildering assortment of puzzles, aliens and traps – and collect the eight Crystals therein before the 144 minute time limit elapses.

The Matrix of Zog is presented as a multi-directionally scrolling 3D landscape, comprised of long passages, junctions and miscellaneous buildings. The player's ship is viewed from an overhead position and is controlled via the normal left/right, up/down commands. Turning corners, however, is only achieved by rebounding off one of the prisms located at every junction. The ship's course is effectively 'reflected' in the face of the prism: hitting a diagonal face turns the ship through 90 degrees, whereas hitting a flat face (or the walls of a building) causes the vessel to do a complete about-face. The mission objective, therefore, is to discover how to reach the

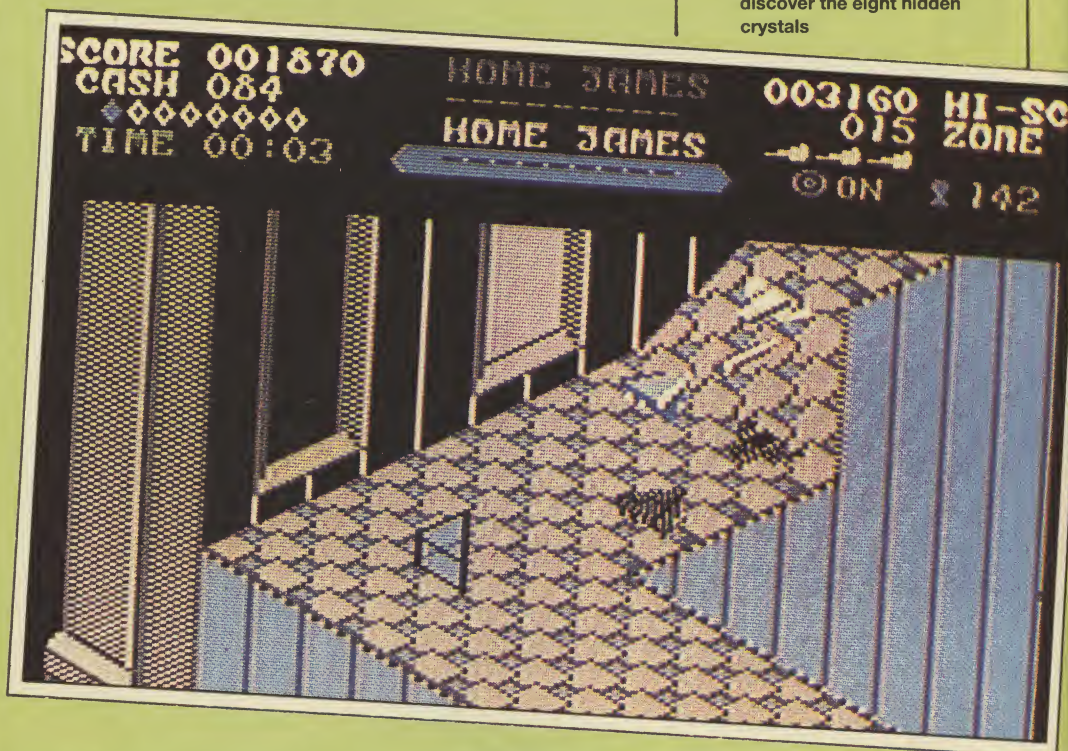
eight gems, since many areas are only entered by particular routes determined by the positions of the prisms.

There are also small switches in the walls and floor which, when shot or flown over, toggle prisms

and sections of wall into and out of existence. These form the basis for most of the puzzles: prisms that apparently send the craft into a blank wall are dependent on that section of wall being switched 'off'.

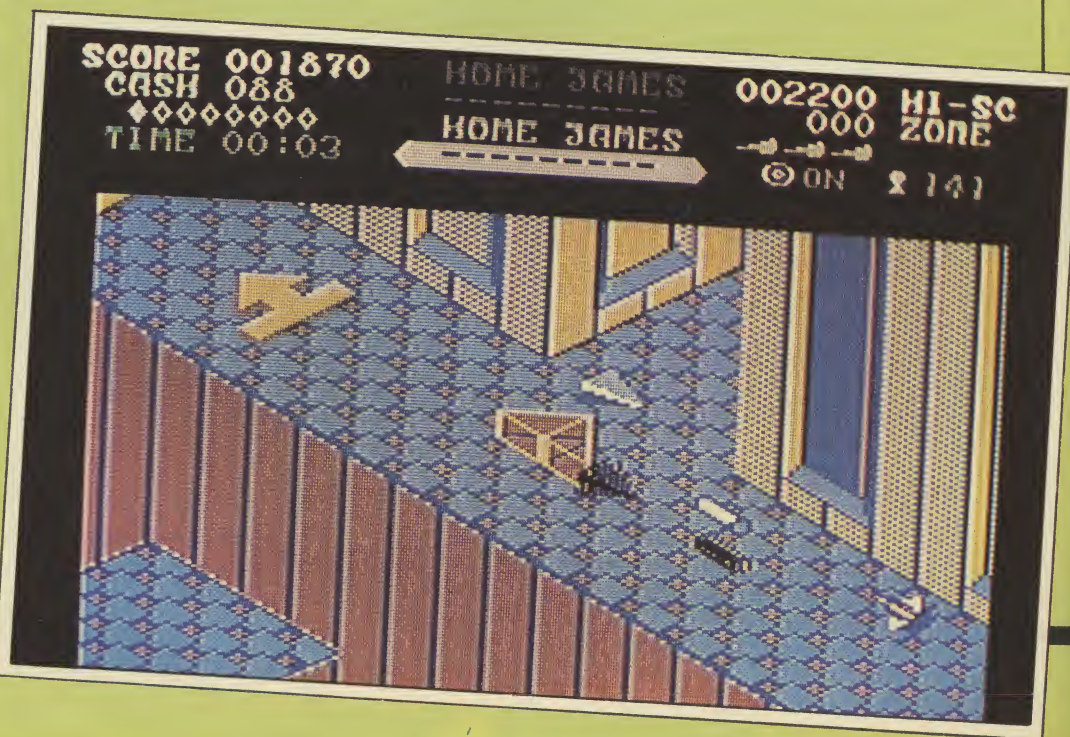
As the mission continues, the craft is attacked by a variety of enemies which range from bouncing killer frogs to small cube-shaped aliens. Collision with one of these results in a loss of one of the player's five ships. Blasting the aggressors earns money, which is used to buy equipment in one of the shops found around the landscape. The obtainable hardware varies in price and obscurity, from Infra-red and X-Ray vision to the vital Shield and Missile abilities. Having bought several of these accessories, the player goes off in search of the eight crystals which he finds to finish the task.

► Negotiating the Maze of Zog to discover the eight hidden crystals



► Superb 3D landscapes make up the maze's labyrinthine interior

After listening to the brilliant tile music and sitting slack-jawed, watching the incredible title screen for a while, I finally started playing. At first I hated it: the control is very fiddly and confusing. Switching to the proper aircraft controls, however, soon put things right and allowed me to play properly. Zig Zag is, without question, a technically brilliant game. The landscape scrolls smoothly and the way that walls flick into existence is incredible. Shoot 'em up fans may not be so keen, but it boasts an impressive list of options and there's enough depth to keep maze freaks and mappers happy for ages.





After a long string of mediocre disappointments, Tony Crowther returns to his old form with the superb Zig Zag. It's a strange cross between Zaxxon and an arcade adventure, and boasts some fabulous graphics and very addictive gameplay. The objective is simple enough, but actually achieving it is a difficult and involved task. Exploring the landscape is an enjoyable occupation, and finding the location of switches and extra banks is very rewarding indeed, giving an even greater urge to continue! The smooth scrolling backdrops have a true feeling of depth, and the way walls appear and disappear is very clever indeed. The excellent music and sound effects also deserve a mention, and the title screen is nothing short of stunning. Zig Zag is an extremely slick and polished program that has been thoughtfully designed and brilliantly conceived.



This game is just so much fun! From the moment you flip round the first corner, to the instant you lose your last life, you're hooked. It has one of the most unusual game styles I've seen, being a puzzle-solving shoot 'em up set in a maze. The program is extremely polished, feels very smooth, and is enhanced by an excellent sound track that, although slightly repetitive, keeps the tempo distinctly up-beat. Perhaps the nicest feature of all is the very humorous scenario which explains the prize for collecting all eight crystals: 'possibly the 13th dimension, untold riches, or a weekend for two in Bognor.' Nice one Mirrorsoft!

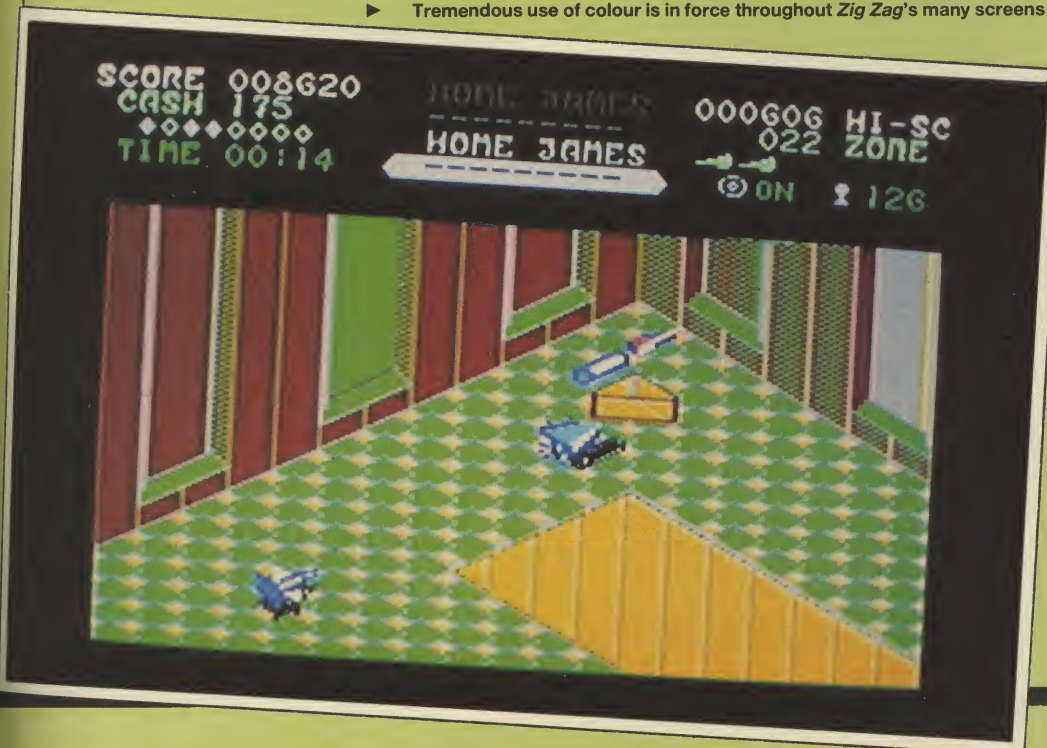
The mission doesn't have to be tackled as a brain teaser. An option on the title screen allows the player to choose a straight shoot 'em up game by turning all the puzzles off, enabling the ship

to move freely throughout the whole map. However, the mission can't be solved in this fashion, but it's useful for mapping. The control method may also be changed from standard to 'pilot'.

► Plenty of blasting and strategy in Tony Crowther's latest and greatest maze game, Zig Zag



► Tremendous use of colour is in force throughout Zig Zag's many screens



PRESENTATION 95%

Numerous in-game options, equipment buying facility and a stupendous title screen.

GRAPHICS 88%

Perfectly smooth scrolling, lots of fast action and beautifully polished titles.

SOUND 90%

Excellent title and game soundtracks, with the alternative of high-class effects.

HOOKABILITY 88%

The control method is tricky to master, but once you start blasting and buying, it's VERY difficult to stop.

LASTABILITY 90%

An enormous map with masses to find, retrieve and shoot.

OVERALL 92%

An unusual, but highly polished shooting and exploring game.

THUNDERCATS

Elite, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys

Lion-o, Tygra, Panthro, Cheetara, Wilycat and Wilykit are a humanoid race of wildcats who were forced to flee their home planet, Thundera, when it was destroyed. Set adrift in a spacecraft, they crash-landed on an alien planet, ruled over by the inevitable baddie, Mumm-Ra, and his despicable minions, the Molemen. The Thundercats set up base in the Cat's Lair, and conflict between the feline heroes and Mumm-Ra soon followed.

During a daring raid by the Molemen, Tygra, Panthro and Wilykit were kidnapped, and the Eye of

Thundera stolen. This mystical jewel energises the Sword of Omens, which in turn gives the Thundercats their powers. Since Lion-o was entrusted with the gem, he decides to infiltrate Mumm-Ra's fortress, castle Plun-Dar, retrieve the Eye and rescue his friends.

The player takes the role of sword-wielding Lion-o and battles across 14 horizontally scrolling levels to castle Plun-dar. Throughout the perilous journey, Molemen attack, removing one of Lion-o's five lives on contact. There are also bottomless pits which the heroic



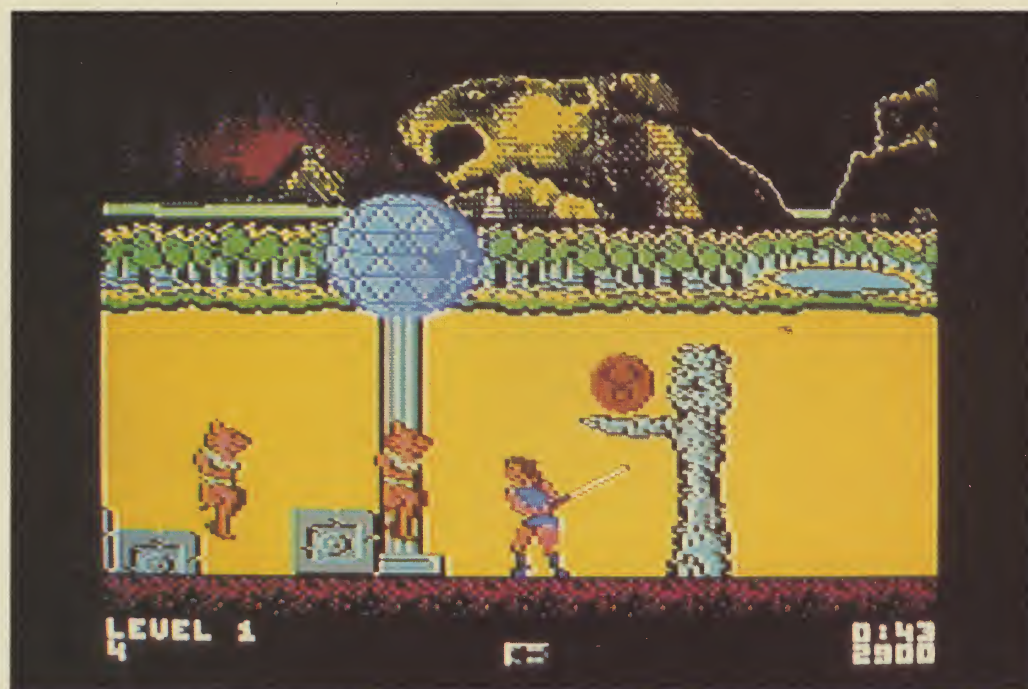
▶ Lion-o continues his mission into Mumm-Ra's forbidding lair



Yet another cartoon series makes the journey from the small screen to the 64. Or rather the title crosses over, leaving the actual content far behind. Either way, Thundercats isn't a complete disaster. The graphics are a strange mixture of digitised pictures, cartoon-style backdrops and large areas of plain colour, which looks odd – but not entirely unpleasant. Gameplay is straightforward, but lacking in control of Lion-o (Lion-o the floor covering, presumably). He can't run and defend himself at the same time, and can't turn on the spot. If there are molemen close on either side, as you turn to despatch the second, Lion-o walks straight into him and gets thumped. This is annoying since you can react in time, but are unable to do anything about it. Still, Thundercats has an irritatingly addictive quality, and should provide a challenge for a week or two.

cat leaps across – falling into one spells instant doom. All is not bad

▶ Digitised graphics add to the overall look of Thundercats



Having never seen the Thundercats on TV, I can't say whether or not

this licence captures the atmosphere of the cartoon. However, as a computer game, it's good, and has an inexplicable addictive quality that keeps you coming back for more. The gameplay is similar to a fast and furious Kung-Fu Master, and getting to the final level should take a fair bit of practice. The graphics are unusual, and while the use of colour is odd, the overall effect is neat. There's a rousing Rob Hubbard title tune some and the sound effects are suitably loud. In fact there's only one niggle: it's possible to sit on level three and knock up an enormous score without doing much. Thundercats isn't an essential purchase by any means, but if you enjoy hacking games, this one has plenty of challenge and addiction.

though, and scattered throughout the landscape are supply boxes which are broken to give either a blaster, sword or extra life.

Progressing through the levels gives Lion-o the chance to rescue his allies: battling successfully through level three rescues Tygra, Panthro is held on level eight and Wilykit is found on the penultimate screen. When Wilykit is safe, Mumm-Ra himself attacks in a fight to the death. If the evil one is despatched, the Eye of Thundera is restored and the Thundercats may live in eternal peace and harmony...



First of all it was Transformers, The Gobots and Masters of the Universe. Now

everyone's favourite bunch of pussycats have been immortalised on your humble home computer. The game is a basic hack and slay affair which I found quite playable at first. However, as time went on I became more and more bored as I hacked away at the seemingly endless droves of molemen. I think beat 'em up fans will enjoy playing Thundercats, but I can't see it holding that much of a grip on anyone else.

PRESENTATION 76%

Game restart and highscore table and pleasant screen layout.

GRAPHICS 67%

An unusual ensemble of styles have dubious aesthetic qualities. Brilliant, although superfluous parallax scrolling.

SOUND 79%

Good Hubbard title music, but some of the in-game effects are harsh and ill-suited.

HOOKABILITY 76%

Enthralling action and strangely addictive from the outset.

LASTABILITY 70%

14 levels should provide a good platform for the player's hacking and slaying talents.

OVERALL 74%

Fails to capture the essence of the TV series, but entertaining and addictive nonetheless.



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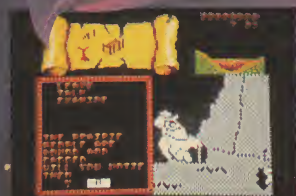
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EARS OF THE WOLF!



SCREENSHOTS FROM AMSTRAD VERSION



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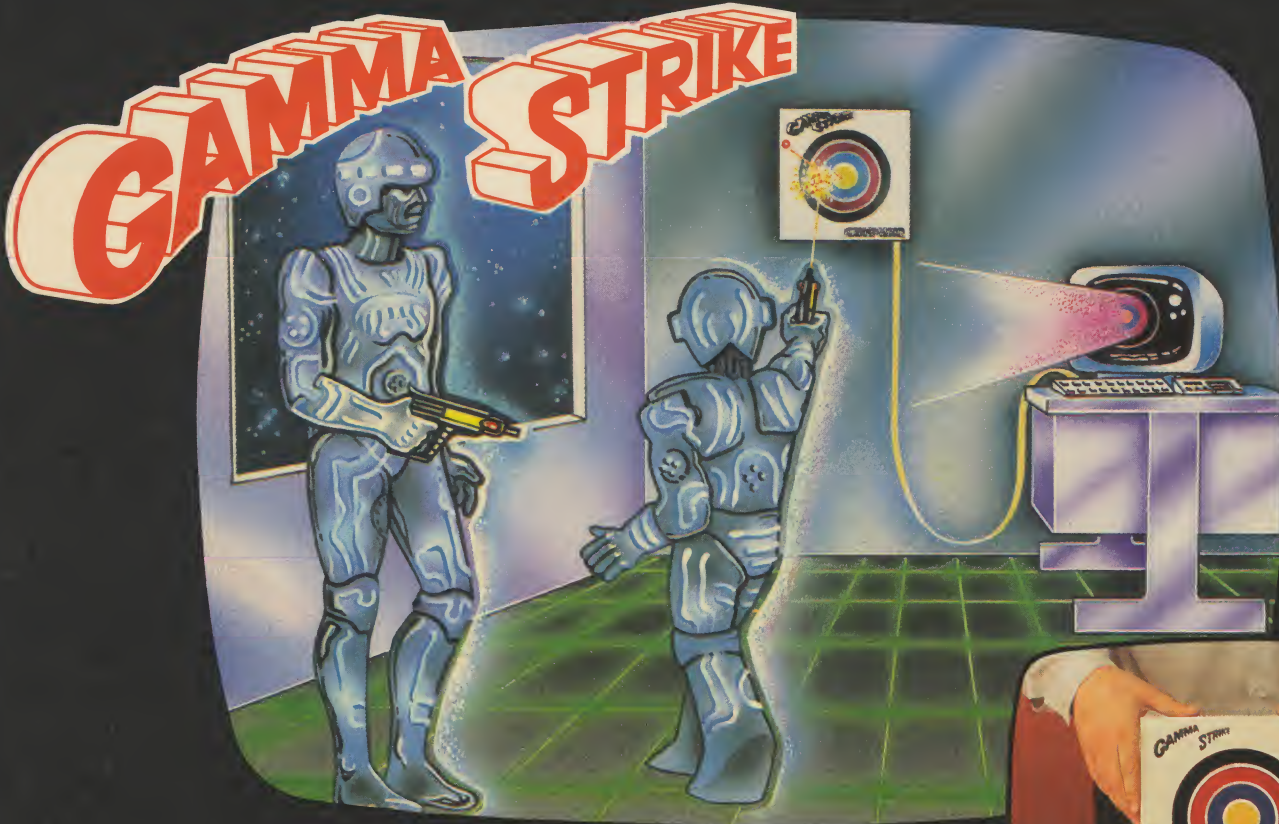
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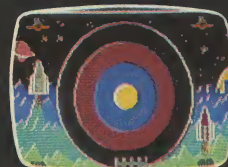
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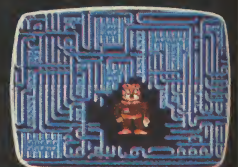
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Voyager 19



The Alien Team

Screen Shots for Commodore 64

EARTH ORBIT STATIONS

Electronic Arts, £16.95 disk, joystick with keys

With the increasing realisation of the importance of space exploration as a commercially viable venture, *EOS* (*Earth Orbit Stations*) comes as a possible candidate as science fact rather than science fiction.

Set toward the end of the century, *EOS* centres around the construction of modular space sta-



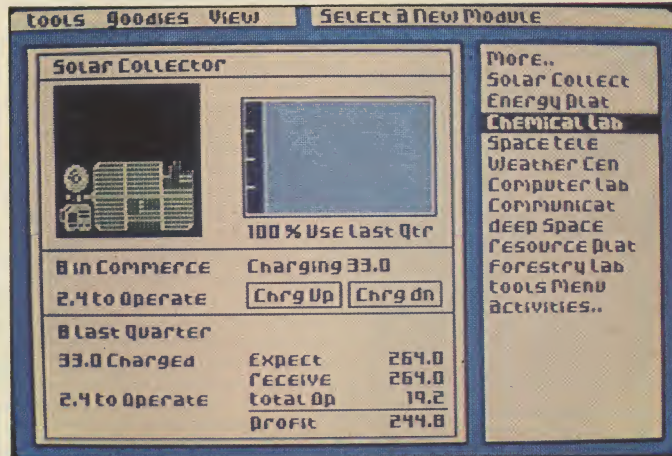
The concept of building space stations and going on five year missions to seek

out life and strange new worlds is a great idea. However, the execution is very poor indeed. The program constantly accesses the disk and loads the extra data at an toe-curlingly slow speed, forcing you to sit and stare at a blank screen for what seems like hours. The other annoying feature is that the game is also incredibly easy to crash! All you have to do is insert the wrong disk at the wrong time and the machine completely locks up. *EOS* has some nice ideas, but unfortunately the gameplay is too slow and unrewarding to be worth persevering with.

tions. Up to four players take the role of aspiring Space Directors and attempt to build and manage space stations, produce profitable products, conduct research and eventually aim to fulfill a mission goal. These missions are:



Having a keen interest in space technology, I hastily loaded the program. At first glance, *EOS* appears terribly complex and rather impressive, but looks can be deceptive. Once I had familiarised myself with the lengthy (and unnecessarily overcomplicated) instructions, it boils down to the simple task of repeatedly building space station after space station, making as much money as possible (a fairly straightforward task), completing research projects and selecting new modules as and when they appear on the menu. *EOS* is laborious, repetitive, and more or less crippled by a frequent and pathetically slow disk accessing system. You might enjoy it, but I don't.



► The option screens look nice, but are a pain to use

Research, Dry Dock, Shuttle, Mars Rescue, Lunar Base, Space Colony and the final option, Search for Life.

'Research' is a simple project to help acclimatize the player(s) to the game and its operation. To complete this scenario, each Director builds a profitable space station and follows market trends (as outlined in the *EOS* news section) to choose the most profitable activity.

Each space station is constructed from purpose built sections that fit together using special connectors. Starting with command, power life and logistics, further sections are added from a wide range of industrial modules.

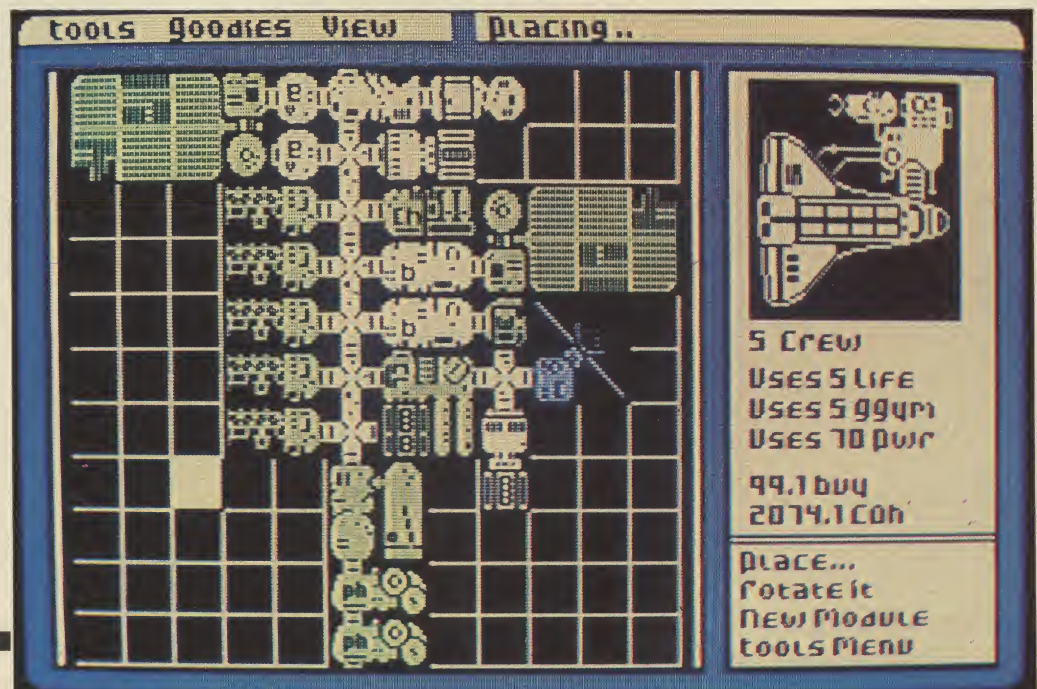
Once a monetary base is developed, research is entered

into. Instead of earning money, these modules collect technology points, and the director with the highest amount of points is deemed to have 'won' the Research mission.

A similar method of play is used in later projects, but definite modules are needed for their successful conclusion. In order to get these modules, the technology required for their construction must be researched. A manned lunar base, for instance, can only be set up once the technology to produce fabrications in space, and the necessary transportation has been researched and developed.

The four participants may be human or controlled by the computer, and the game in progress may be saved to disk at any time.

► The complex graphics belie its inherent simplicity



EOS is an involved game from the start. Practice is definitely

required before you can get around to playing a mission 'seriously', let alone completing one! The vast array of modules for attachment provide plenty of scope for station construction, and with seven missions, the possibilities are endless! The time taken to process each turn could have been speeded up, and possibly the instructions could have contained a couple more diagrams for the first-time player.

PRESENTATION 38%

Slow and cumbersome disk access, badly structured menu system and limited and slightly confusing instructions.

GRAPHICS 55%

Adequate representation of stations and modules.

SOUND 23%

Pathetic title rendition of Strauss' 'Blue Danube' and meagre beeps to confirm selections thereafter.

HOOKABILITY 25%

It takes quite a while to wade through the instructions and lengthy disk operations.

LASTABILITY 32%

There are plenty of missions, but single player mode is fairly pointless and the computer is a poor adversary.

OVERALL 40%

An admirable idea, but the design and implementation is far below expectations of the asking price.

BETTER STAY IN ORBIT/EN21



CAPTAIN AMERICA

GO!, £9.99 cass, £11.99 disk, joystick only

Captain America's foe, the mad Dr Megalomann, has issued a grim ultimatum: submit him the Presidency of America or suffer the consequences of an exploding underground germ missile!

With the fatal deadline only an hour away, Captain America is



Well, what a less-than-auspicious start for GO! Captain America is pure rubbish.

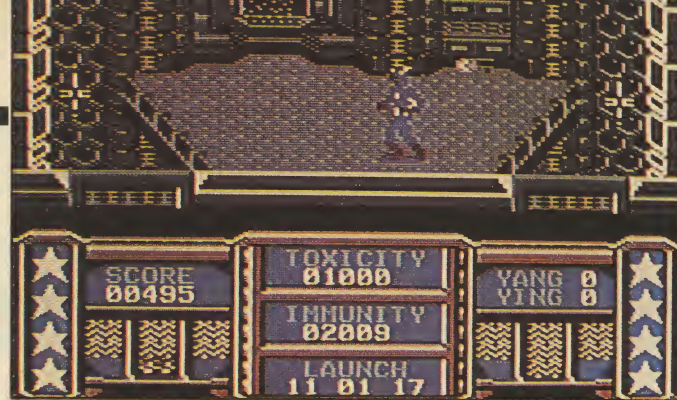
While it does in fact look and sound quite good, the gameplay is repetitious and dull. Just to make it even worse, it's hard too. An annoying aspect is the program's persistence on running the same old 'joke' ('By the time you read this the Tube will self-destruct'. Cue static, then, 'Only joking - this time'). This side-splitter appears every time you restart the game, which is really irritating. Come on, GO! let's see something a bit more playable.

called upon to enter the multi-level bunker, better known as the Doom



I used to collect Marvel comics years ago, and therefore

received this with nostalgic interest. However, my high hopes were soon dashed. The graphics are unusual, and the Captain America sprite is great - but apart from that, there's little else of merit. The gameplay is original, which is a nice thing to see, but it's also very confusing and severely lacking in variety. Captain America wanders around the seemingly alien environment looking completely out of place. It'd have been nice if he'd been battling some of his old Axis enemies, or some super villain rather than just slinging his shield at a series of boring automatons. Perhaps GO! can have a second crack at the licence.



Tube, and neutralise the missile before it releases its contents.

The whole Doom Tube is contaminated with the toxin, the concentration of which increases towards the bottom of the shaft. Captain America only operates safely on levels with a lower toxin level than his immunity count - entering a room to the contrary proves rapidly fatal.

The Tube is inhabited by robot guards who fire upon the hero. Mr America isn't defenceless though, and has an armoury of six shields which destroy the aggressors on contact. If a shield is thrown correctly, it returns to Captain America. However, if one is thrown beyond the confines of the screen, it's lost for good.

To reach the missile chamber, Captain America has to locate the parts of a password and collect the ingredients of an anti-toxin to increase his immunity level.

When the vault is reached, the complete password is entered to neutralise the missile and save the USA.

PRESENTATION 47%

Restart and music on/off options, but the instructions are very unhelpful.

GRAPHICS 69%

Well detailed and nicely coloured backgrounds and reasonable sprites.

SOUND 61%

An unusual, but oddly pleasant title tune, with fairly average spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 38%

Poor instructions lead to confusion and the gameplay only serves to compound this.

LASTABILITY 35%

The repetitive and difficult gameplay gives *Captain America* little lasting appeal.

OVERALL 36%

The Marvel Comics' hero looks totally out of place in this ill-conceived and poorly executed shoot 'n' search game.

HOW TO BE A COMPLETE BASTARD

Virgin Games, £9.95 cassette, joystick or keys

Ade Edmondson, BA(stard) has decided to follow-up his book with a computer game. The player controls the obnoxious author around a Yuppie party he has gate-crashed and



I'm a great fan of 'sexy' Ade Edmondson, and have followed his antics from 'The

Young Ones' to 'Comic Relief' - he's hilarious! So, why don't I find this game particularly funny? Maybe it's because the so-called humour is incredibly infantile. When you have features like 'fartometers' and 'weeometers', it does seriously make me wonder what computer games are coming to. The graphics are totally pathetic, with feeble sprites staggering around a series of unclear and unimaginative backdrops. The £10 price tag has got to be the funniest thing of all.

tries to offend as many guests as possible, causing them to leave. While doing this, he attempts to score points for carrying out particularly horrible deeds, such as putting clingfilm over the toilet and hurling dog mess around the room.

The display is in 'Bastavision' which comprises two viewing screens, each of which can display four different angles of the trainee idiot. This means that the player views his protégé from the side and behind simultaneously.

While roaming the house, Ade searches household furniture for items to help carry out his horrible



The book is amusing in a lavatorial sort of way, but unfortunately the com-

puter version falls flat on its face. Once you've seen all the jokes and done all pranks, the action becomes very tedious and there's very little urge to continue. The sprites are poorly animated, and the background graphics are pathetic. Sound effects are a rarity, and the title tune isn't in character with the action. Ade moves around the house at a staggeringly slow speed, which makes the action terribly frustrating. If you want to be both amused and entertained, buy the book and put the change towards a couple of good budget titles.

pranks. The most significant of these include urinating and pass-

ing wind, preferably in public places for maximum offence. The potential for these acts of indecency are measured on two meters either side of the screen, which increase the more Ade consumes or imbibes.

Ultimately, Ade attempts to score points for grossness, and when he manages to make a guest leave, one of the letters in 'Complete Bastard' lights up at the bottom of the screen. His unsavoury task is deemed complete when all the letters are lit.

PRESENTATION 59%

Good packaging, but an awkward and unclear display

GRAPHICS 31%

Tiny, badly animated and monochrome backdrops.

SOUND 42%

A few effects and an unsuitable title tune.

HOOKABILITY 52%

The display is confusing, but the jokes amuse.

LASTABILITY 34%

It doesn't take long for the humour to wear thin, and once this happens there's little to keep you playing.

OVERALL 33%

A poor attempt at a dubious conversion.





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BANGKOK KNIGHTS

System 3, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick only

● A technically and visually stunning kick-boxing simulation

Following hot on the heels of the highly successful *Last Ninja* is System 3's long-awaited martial arts simulation, *Bangkok Knights*.

Huge 'cartoon style' sprites and multi-directionally scrolling backdrops portray the action as the player travels to Bangkok and partakes in a kick-boxing championship. Control is achieved in what has become 'standard' fashion for beat 'em ups: all eight joystick positions are used for different attacks, with a further eight obtainable with the button depressed. These moves range from high and low punches to shin and head kicks. What isn't so standard is the optional 'intelligent' attack system. In this mode each joystick position corresponds to two attacks: a short and long range. The program knows how far the player is from his opponent, and the computer selects the attack with the correct range needed to hit - very useful for the first-time player.

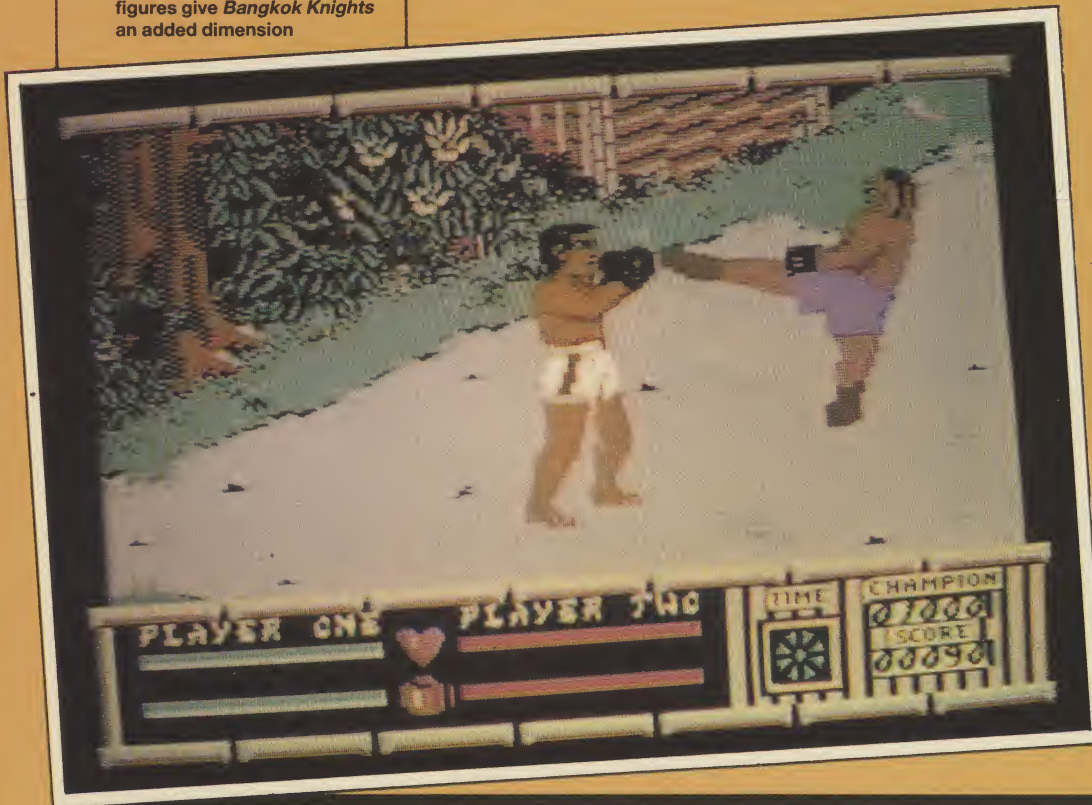
When the combatants are locked in battle, the strength and endurance meters at the bottom of the screen come into play. Strength is related to the number

of exhausting moves a player has executed. Many head kicks, for example, tire the fighter quickly, while punches are far more economical. Endurance is simply an indication of how much more damage a fighter can take before he is knocked down. The winner is the first to knock down his opponent three times.

The player starts as a country boy, and proves his worth by battling a series of local hard-men. Man Chu Man is the first opponent and is fought on the edge of a high cliff. Next comes a jungle confrontation with the psychotic Bambo. Finally the budding boxer takes a trip to the market place in the centre of



► Huge, smoothly animated figures give *Bangkok Knights* an added dimension



► Battling it out in a downtown Bangkok marketplace

town where that duckin' and divin' cheeky chappie, Killa Kale, is confronted. Only when these three foes are defeated can the championships be entered.

In the finals, the player contests four bouts against eight different opponents. Each of the fighters



It seems that combat games are definitely back in favour again, with International Karate + and Renegade last month, and now Bangkok Knights. Although not as perfectly produced as IK+, this is just as playable, with a large variety of opponents and attack styles. The sprites are amazing, they're incredibly big, very well animated, and are complemented by classic sampled sounds when blows land, or one of the fighters collapses. I'm not too sure about the computer-aided attacks - it's a good idea, but not on a game of this type where reactions and joystick handling should be a premium. It smacks of a 'help' mode in chess. In its favour, it does at least enable novices to learn the game quickly. Still, that's my only niggle - otherwise Bangkok Knights is superb, and shouldn't be missed.

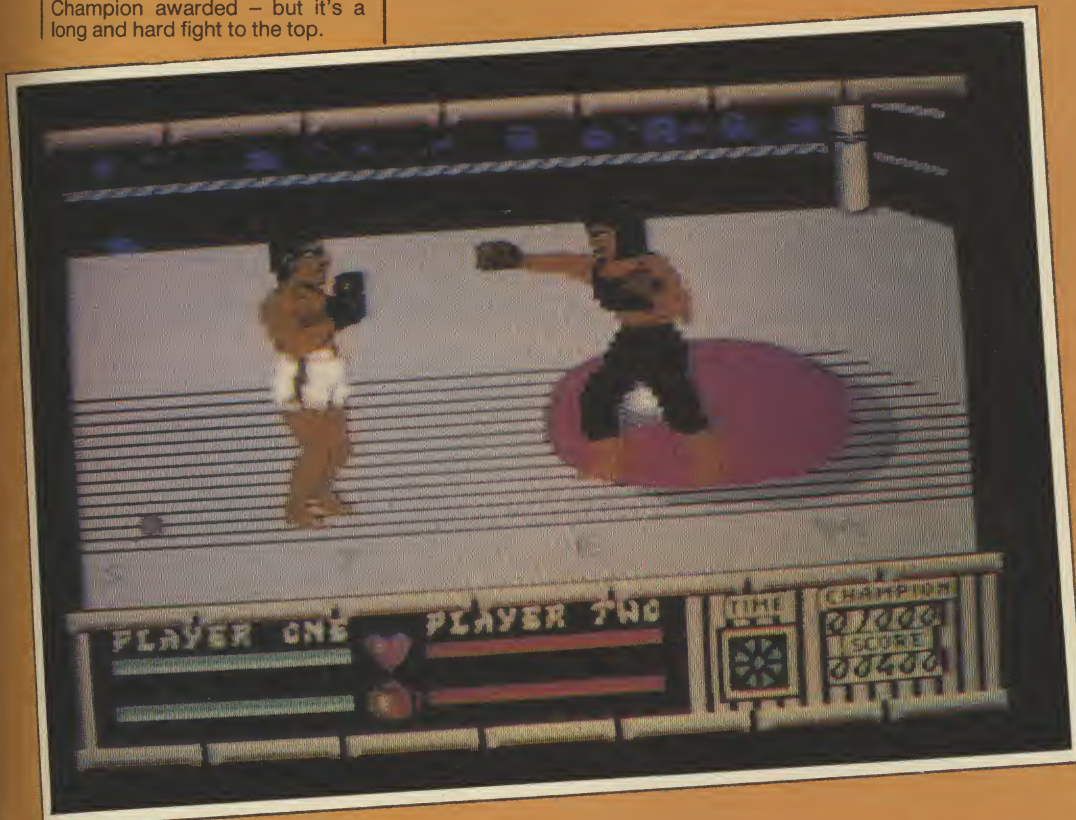


has a specialised move, including deadly blown kisses, swift kicks to the lower regions, toe-stomps, head butts and as a light joke, Ninja Magic!

Only when all eight fighters have been disposed of is the title of Champion awarded – but it's a long and hard fight to the top.



► The attention to detail is superb – right down to the curvaceous sign bearer



► Fighting action in the kick-boxing ring – obviously sponsored by System 3

System 3's latest release is beautifully designed, and really pushes the beat 'em up genre to its limits. There are many features which set it apart, most notable of which is the huge characters that battle across the excellent backdrops. Their sheer size alone is stunning, but add to this some great animation and you have a truly impressive game. Perhaps its most appealing facet – and one it shares with its predecessor, The Last Ninja – is that it's so well produced. It's full of neat touches that make it interesting and pleasant to play, such as the screen 'fade' and the way the players appear and disappear. Bangkok Knights may only be a beat 'em up, but for fans of the genre it's ten quid wisely spent.



Beat 'em up fans have never had it so good! The latest offering of Oriental violence has a humorous slant, and is very, very playable. The graphics are marvellous, with huge, beautifully animated sprites fighting across equally good backdrops. Some of the moves are great, and I particularly like the way the fighter splats like a concertina when he gets knocked on the head. Programmer Mark Spruthers has also done wonders with the controls – as well as normal fighting mode, there's also the 'intelligent' joystick option which lets you concentrate more on dodging blows, than dealing them. The action is nicely structured, and the intro fights before the contest give the player a chance to warm-up for the really tough guys (and girls). Bangkok Knights is a very playable and entertaining beat 'em up, and I thoroughly recommend you try it out.



PRESENTATION 94%

Very slick in-game presentation, further enhanced by the amazingly original computer assisted attack option.

GRAPHICS 93%

Big, colourful and well animated, with superb backgrounds.

SOUND 89%

Quality sampled effects for the fights, and good tunes throughout.

HOOKABILITY 86%

Fighting is tough, but the intelligent joystick control helps.

LASTABILITY 84%

Enough opponents to make the game last more than just a few nights.

OVERALL 90%

A competent and playable beat 'em up, which has enough variety and innovation to make it a worthwhile purchase.



TEST

COMPUTER SCRABBLE DE LUXE

Leisure Genius/Virgin, £12.95 cass, £15.95 disk, keys only



entire vocabulary contains over 20,000 words – so prepare to see words that you never thought existed!

Each player is given seven let-

JW Spear's classic board game was first conceived in the late 1940's, and since then has appeared in many formats – Scrabble, Scrabble De Luxe, Travel Scrabble and Pocket Scrabble. Now the range is further expanded with a computer version of *Scrabble De Luxe*.

As expected, the game follows the rules of the board version. At the start an options screen allows any combination of four human or computer opponents to be chosen. Computer players are individually set to one of eight levels. One to four have a limited vocabulary and are therefore more suitable for a novice. On levels five and eight the computer also responds with any of the acceptable two, three and four letter words and extensions found in Chambers' 20th Century Dictionary and Chambers' WORDS, the official Scrabble reference books. The

► The computerised Scrabble board. Cam, what's a 'FEHME'?



X-15 ALPHA MISSION

Activision, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick only

America is under threat from a terrorist organisation who have secretly placed an armed space station in orbit. Unless their demands are met, the



Behind the fanciful plot of X-15 Alpha Mission lies a reasonable shoot 'em up.

Fighting through the levels requires a lot of skill and endurance, with the killer satellites proving the toughest opponents as you near the space station. The simplistic vector-style graphics are effective and well executed. Sound effects are a rarity though, with the tunes and effects proving totally unsuitable. The lack of variety between the first three levels, both in gameplay and graphics makes it rather tedious to play, and once completed, there isn't much of an incentive to warrant another attempt.



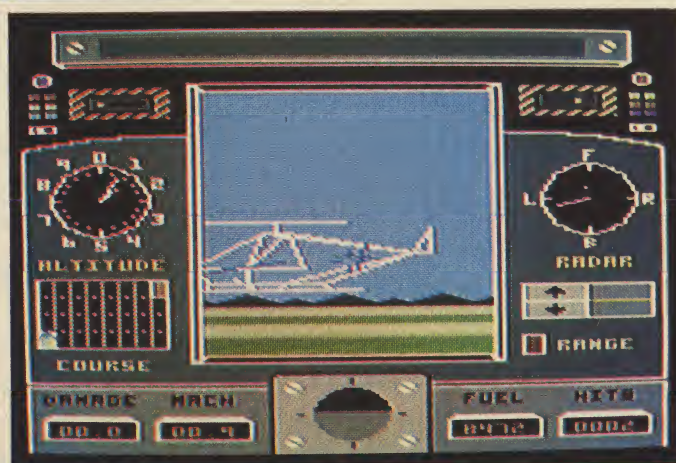
After reading the scenario on the inlay, I had high hopes. However, they were soon dashed after a couple of sessions. Although the program is very slick, with some great graphics and clever effects, the gameplay isn't very exciting. There is a challenge there, but the action is so repetitive it's hardly worth persevering with. If programmer John Van Ryzin had put a little more thought into the game design, X-15 Alpha Mission might have been good, but as it stands, there just isn't enough to warrant the £10 price tag.

station's full destructive power is to be turned on a number of unspecified American cities.

Only one course of action remains: to send a pilot, flying the X-15 spaceplane into orbit to seek out and destroy the space station. That pilot is you.

After a mission briefing from the

missile-firing helicopters, jets and killer satellites which are all destroyed by accurate shooting. Cruise missiles, however, are immune to the X-15's armoury,



► An enemy helicopter whizzes past the cockpit

Pentagon containing the vital access code for the space station, the mission begins. The X-15 is flown through three levels of the atmosphere, eventually reaching outer space. Each level has its own brand of enemy craft, including

and are avoided by rapidly climbing or diving.

Once the space station becomes visible, placing the cross hairs over the station's centre is met with a prompt to input the access code given at the start of the mission. Successful code entry prompts the launch of the excursion module, which has to be flown through a mass of asteroids

ters, randomly apportioned from the standard set of 98 plus two blanks. A word is made and placed on the board in such a way that it fits in with one of the words already there. The seven letters forming the rack may be 'juggled' around, allowing the player to view the tiles in a random order. Placing the tiles is accomplished by typing in the full word and positioning a cursor on the board where the first letter is to be. Typing 'A' or 'D' places the word across the board or down accordingly. Unfortunately, the 'board' provided is displayed in monochrome rather than the normal beige with red and blue squares. While this forms no major drawback, it's a rather poor substitute for the real thing and becomes harsh on the eyes after a heavy playing session.

Once a word is positioned, the computer displays the score gained by its placement, taking into account any new words made and the premium squares the word falls on (double word and letter score), and triple word and letter score). A prompt asks if a new word is to be positioned, and if the score is adequate, a response of 'N' ends the turn, and the next player's rack is displayed.

As the computer's vocabulary is finite, it occasionally comes across a word during play that it does not recognise, and a challenge is issued. If it turns out that a

player's word does not in fact exist, it is removed and the current turn forfeited.

The game continues in this fashion until either one player uses all of his tiles and no more remain, or neither player can place any more tiles. The computer then displays the final scores and asks if another game is to be played.

A feature of this version is a built-in clock which allows contestants to play against an adjustable timer. This can speed the game up tremendously and also adds the tension of being under pressure to finish a turn within a short period of time. The clock may be set from a lightning ten seconds to a more leisurely 9 minutes and 59 seconds.

Aesthetic niggles apart, *Scrabble De Luxe* is about as good as one can expect from home computer. It's easy to use, fast, and provides a brilliant opponent. There are plenty of options which also make the game user friendly and adjustable to suit the human player. If you're a fan of the board game, but lack an opponent, *Scrabble De Luxe* is an almost essential purchase. Those who haven't played before should try it out - not only does it get the old grey matter clanking back into action, but also helps expand your vocabulary AND is highly enjoyable. *Scrabble De Luxe* may be pricey, but you'll be playing it for years!



After John Van Ryzin's previous effort, *HERO*, I expected something a mite special. All the ingredients are there, but while the graphics and style of the game are quite polished, the repetitive nature and lack of variety lead to a swiftly diminishing interest. The graphics are clever, with some pretty nippy vectors, but the X-15's all-important lasers are inaccurate. Helicopters and jets can only be destroyed when they appear full size; blasting an approaching dot is useless. Both sections do hold a challenge of sorts, but the shallow nature of the game becomes apparent on repeat plays. I really don't think that X-15 Alpha Mission holds very much in the lastability stakes - I'm bored with it already.

in order to successfully land on the station's surface.

On landing, a group of remote control robots disembark and are guided across the station surface in order to seek out and connect with the exterior weapon systems. Once a droid is securely interfaced, it is then ordered to self-destruct, effectively disabling that

particular system. When all the weapon systems have been destroyed, the last robot is then directed to the central power system where the station finally explodes.

PRESENTATION 78%

Annoying delay at the beginning, but otherwise decent.

GRAPHICS 67%

Extremely quick vector graphic enemy craft, but fairly average thereafter.

SOUND 40%

Uninspiring title music and in-game effects.

HOOKABILITY 58%

After the compulsory (and somewhat tedious) lift-off sequence, the first shoot 'em up section provides moderate excitement.

LASTABILITY 45%

Once the first section is mastered, the second section shouldn't provide too much of a hurdle for the hardened gamer.

OVERALL 46%

A brave attempt at a strategy/shoot 'em up, which unfortunately falls short of the mark.

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NEBULUS

Hewson, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick or keys

● Incredibly compulsive platform/puzzle action



On the planet Nebulus, trouble is brewing. Someone has been building giant towers in the sea without planning permission, and Destructo Inc has been given the job of demolishing them. The player takes the role of the unfortunate worker who has been given the mission.

The demolition expert arrives at the bottom of each tower by submarine. He's a typical Nebulense; a fat, little green biped capable of jumping and firing energy blobs.

To successfully destroy a tower, the worker reaches the top within a set time limit. This is easier said than done, and requires the worker to negotiate a series of platforms,

steps, lifts, and doors which run all the way around the outside of the building. The action is displayed in 3D, with the tower rotating as the worker walks around its exterior. Walking up steps, or using lifts to reach a higher level makes the screen scroll vertically.

The worker's progress up the

There's no doubt about it, Nebulus is sheer inspiration – it's completely original and beautifully designed, and I defy anyone to play it and keep their cool. Not since Boulderdash has a game been so playable and frustrating. Each level has been brilliantly thought out, so that you always get a little bit further with every go. However, when you just begin to think you're doing well, some horrible trap or puzzle claims that last life, and you have to start all over again. This gameplay is incredibly rewarding, but never quite satisfying enough, so you have to return for 'just another go'. Consequently, once you start playing it's very difficult to stop – work completely ground to a halt in the office! The marvellous gameplay is supported by some incredible graphics. The 3D rotational effect is absolutely amazing, and the main sprite is superbly animated. Even the sound effects are good! Nebulus is a wonderful combination of platform action and mind-bending puzzles, and offers days of solid play – buy it at your peril.

tower is hindered by a variety of obstructions, ranging from bouncing balls and rotating aliens to flashing wall blocks and flying eyeballs. Bouncing balls and flashing blocks are destroyed by

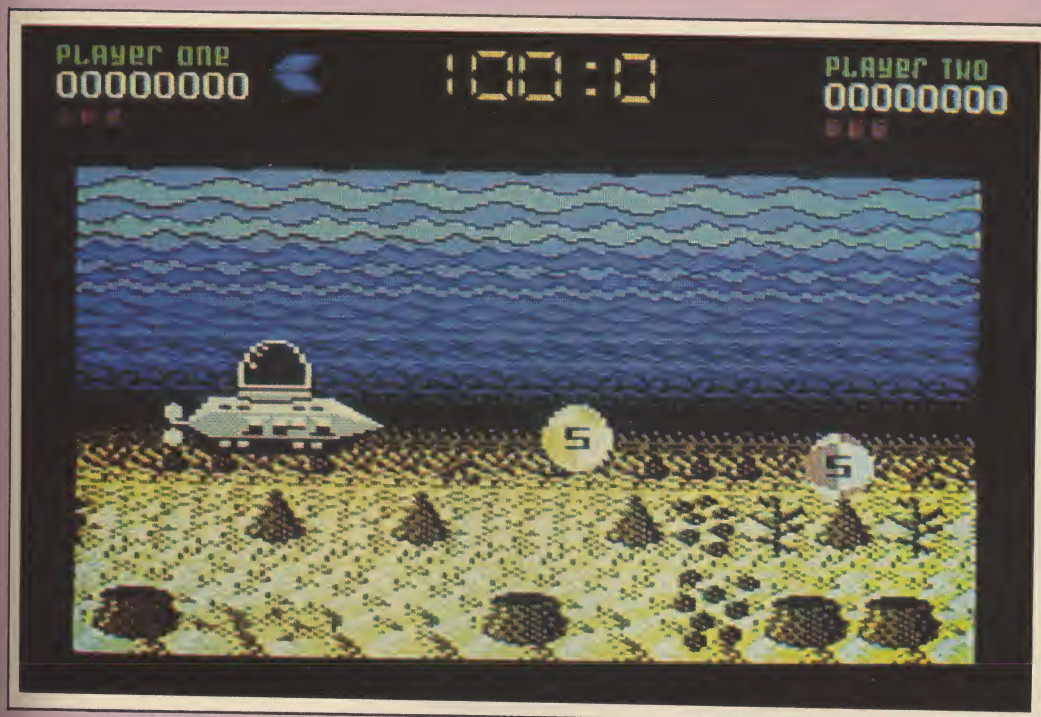
energy blobs, while all other hazards are avoided. Failure to dodge any moving object, or stepping onto a disappearing platform results in the worker falling. He's a hardy beast and is able to drop any

► The spheres can be shot but the eye must be dodged



► The Destructo Inc worker begins his ascent of the first tower





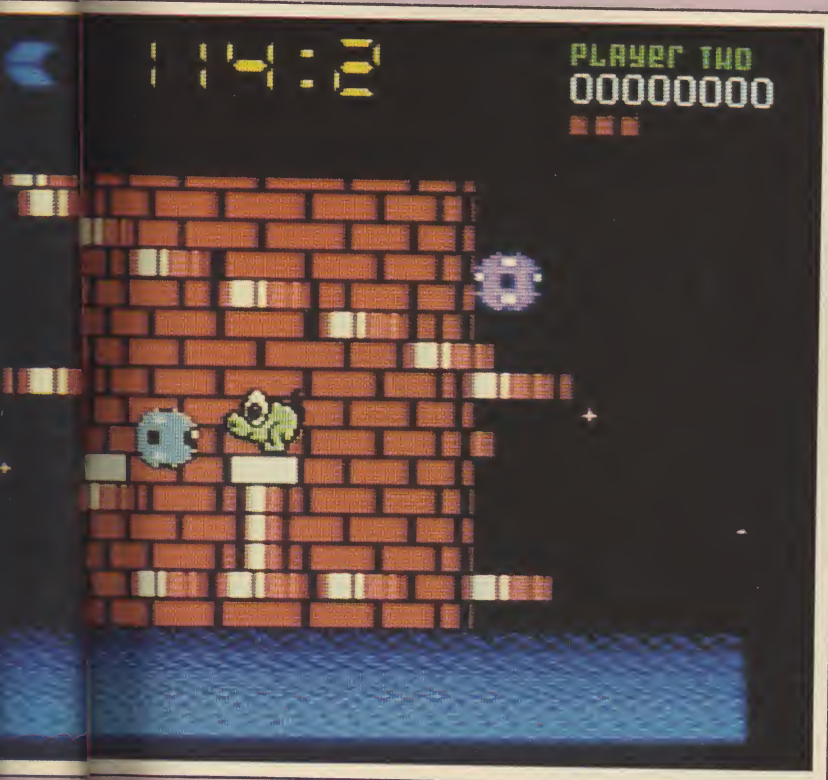
► Incredibly effective parallax scrolling on the sub-aqueous bonus section

distance, as long as a platform breaks his fall. However, dropping into the sea is fatal, and one of his five lives is lost. A life is also lost if the time limit expires before the top of the tower is reached.

When the highest door is entered, the tower is destroyed and sinks rapidly into the sea. The worker re-

boards his mini-sub, and enters a horizontally scrolling bonus level where he attempts to catch fish by firing air bubbles at them. After this brief interlude, he is deposited at the base of the next tower to continue his work. There are eight towers in all, each requiring a different strategy to complete them.

► Riding an elevator on the second level



I often find it amusing how the amount of hype given to a game is often inversely proportional to the quality of the finished product. Nebulus is another case in point. No pre-release advertising, one demo game at the PCW show, and that's about it. The game is absolutely superb; simple, totally original, and brilliantly executed.

Graphically, Nebulus is flawless. Watch the rotating towers from a couple of feet away and I challenge anyone not to be totally convinced. If this isn't enough, the parallax scrolling in the bonus section is equally incredible. This gameplay hasn't been neglected either: the word 'addictive' fails to amply convey the lure that Nebulus holds. Forget film tie-ins and 'officially licensed' games – true originality wins through every time. Buy it and believe.



In what has to be the most amazing month for software, my money goes on Nebulus as the most entertaining of the three Gold Medals. The graphics have seriously got to be seen to be believed – still shots CANNOT do them justice. Their quality is in the animation: the parallax scrolling, the tower rotation, and the cute little green alien are all stunning. This game is not just technically brilliant though, as the programmer has managed to capture the most elusive element of all – addictiveness; I'm not sure whether it's the Boulderdash theory of 'this time I'll beat it', or the slick presentation that makes the whole experience of playing enjoyable, but you just keep coming back for more. It seems that Hewson have again shown the bigger software houses that quality is what counts, not just a good idea, an expensive license, or glossy advertising. Keep it up! The software industry needs games like this.



PRESENTATION 95%

Beautifully presented, with all the in-game options necessary.

GRAPHICS 97%

Truly stunning effects for the tower rotation, and excellent parallax scrolling in the bonus stage.

SOUND 88%

High quality title music, and thoughtful effects throughout.

HOOKABILITY 97%

Absolutely impossible to stop playing – even though it's infuriatingly difficult.

LASTABILITY 91%

The eight towers require enormous perseverance to crack, and even when they've been conquered, there's always an improved time to go for.

OVERALL 97%

One of the most innovative games ever, and one which adds a whole new dimension to the platform game format.



PREVIEW

COMING SOON TO A MONITOR NEAR YOU



US Gold have been busy this month, with two arcade conversions and a new RPG in the final throes of completion.

The first of the conversions is *Sidearms*, Capcom's one or two player horizontally scrolling, progressive shoot 'em up. The two fighters fly across an alien-infested landscape, blasting for all they're worth. Occasionally a dead alien yields a bonus pod, which enhances the ship's defences or offences when collected.

In two player mode, both ves-



► *Sidearms* takes the form of a two-player *Salamander* variant



▲ Skateboarding looks like its coming back into fashion, with US Gold's 720°

sels appear on screen simultaneously, theoretically making the assault easier. Occasionally, both merge into one craft for particularly difficult areas – such as the end of a level.

The action is very frenetic, and looks like being almost as good a blast as the original.

The second arcade conversion is Atari's 720°, a technically amazing skateboard game which is currently being programmed by *Space Harrier* author, Chris Butler.

The player collects tickets in the multi-directionally scrolling *Skate City* to gain access to one

▼ GO!'s latest RPG/arcade adventure promises a wealth of spelling, shooting and searching

of the many skate parks. Once inside, he works on his techniques in both freestyle and competitive action, performing as many stunts as possible to earn bonus points, hopefully building up to the 720° – a manoeuvre in which he performs two complete revolutions while airborne.

Chris Butler has coped magnificently, transferring much of the original feel into the game while maintaining a high graphic quality. The game should be available the New Year – so look out for a review in the coming months.

In a different vein, GO! are currently working on a new RPG to compete in the *Ultima/Bard's Tale* genre. The game, *Wizard Warz*, is the tale of a megalomaniacal warlock determined to become Chief Wizard. To achieve this end, he travels the countryside, fighting monsters and other wizards, building up an arsenal of spells as he goes.

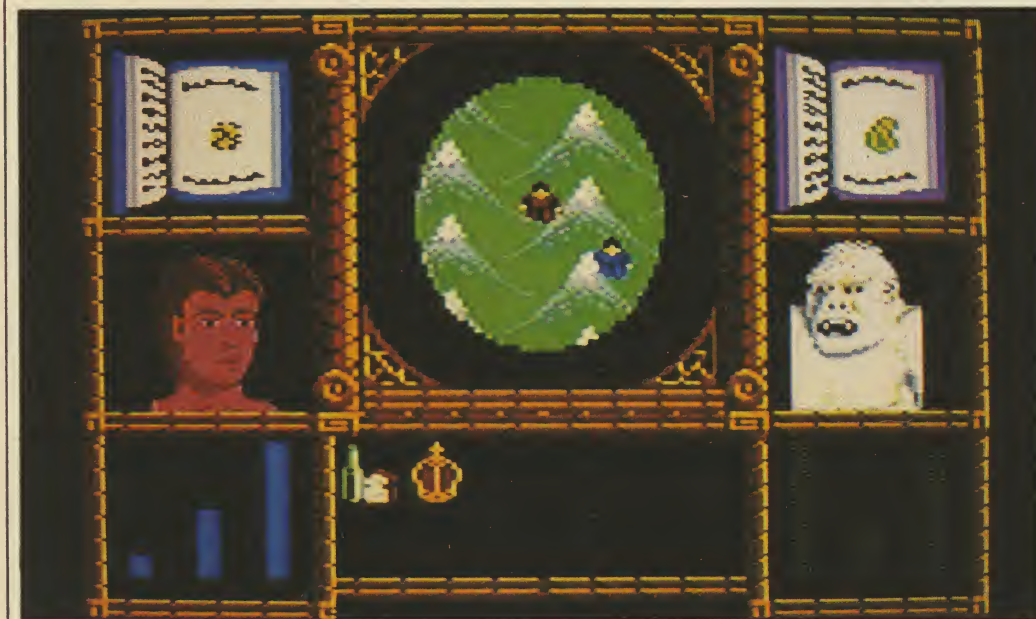
The screen format is standard for this type of game: a small graphic display of the land, surrounded by information about the player's character and his enemies. For combat, the display is magnified, with the opposing parties duelling in a small arena, set in the surrounding countryside. The player has an armoury of spells which to cast, each one exhausting the opposing wizard in a different way.

While the idea behind the game is not the most original, the approach is novel, with a greater than usual emphasis on combat and high quality presentation.



It may have escaped your attention, but *Piranha* are in the final stages of completing *Judge Death*, the latest computer version of a 2000 AD comic star. In this latest release, the player controls psi-operative, Judge Anderson – Judge Death's living nemesis – in a mission to find and destroy all four of the Dark Judges: Fear, Fire, Mortis and Death.

In its present stage of development, the game involves two shooting sequences. In the first, picture-bearing targets flash on randomly for a few brief seconds. Some have images of



THE PHENOMENON CONTINUES

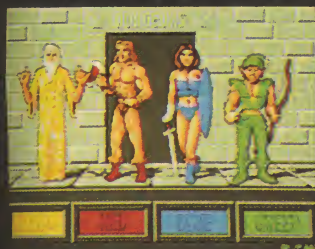
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acid puddles, forcefields and moving exits make your progress all the more difficult. But there are mystical amulets to be gained which will enhance your powers to repel the monsters, walk through walls or increase your fire power. You may even move some of the maze walls to your advantage. Gauntlet II is not just a further episode in this enthralling crusade, it is a whole new experience in action packed adventure.



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PREVIEW



PALACE SOFTWARE

After the enormous success of *Barbarian* on many machine formats, Steve Brown and his team at Palace Software are set for their next stunner, *Rimrunner*. In the highly original scenario, a race of insectoids is under attack from a mutant breed of arachnoids (spiders to you). To defend themselves, the insectoids have built giant domes to live under on each of their planets, but these are powered by generators which require constant maintenance to keep them working properly.

The player controls an insectoid given the responsibility of keeping the domes working, and travels from generator to generator around the rim of the dome on the back of his trusty dinosaur steed – the Rimrunner. Hindering him in his task is a huge number of aliens, which attack in waves as he runs between generators. This forms the main body of the game, and is depicted as a fast, horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up.

Should the player maintain the generators for the required period of time, he completes that level and moves on to the



► The hero of Palace's new horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up has an unusual mode of transport...

next, more difficult planet.

The game should be a polished production, featuring parallax effects on the horizontal scrolling backdrops, more brilliant Richard Joseph music

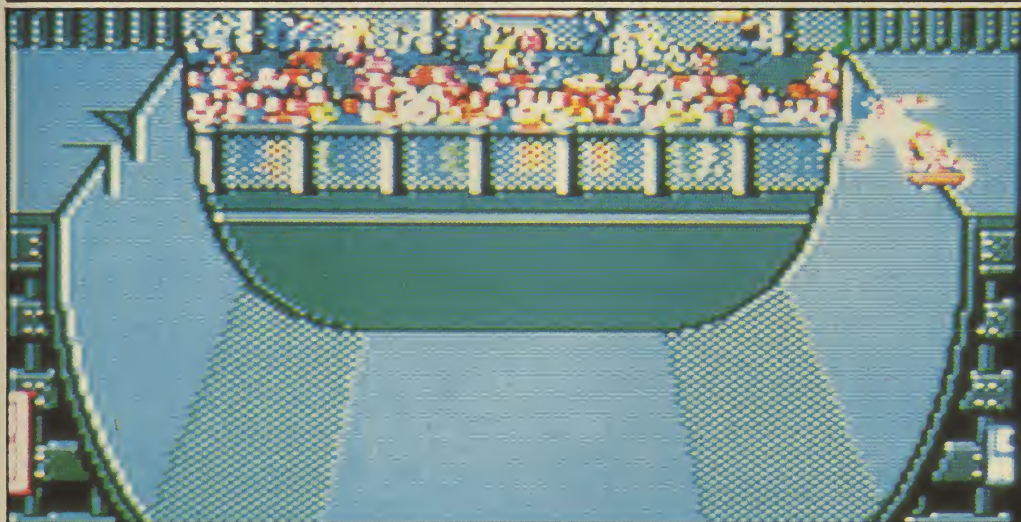
and FX and some surprising touches: at the start, the player's insect calls his beast by whistling, as if calling a dog, and when the beast dies, he turns to a skeleton beneath the rider!



ELECTRONIC ARTS™

Competing with US Gold's *720°* is Electronic Art's *Skate Or Die*, another skateboarding simulation written by the authors of *Summer Games*. In this version, the player chooses to enter one of five different competitions, three based on professional events and two specially designed for the game. The three 'real' events are Ramp Freestyle, Downhill Race and Ramp Hill Jump, in which up to eight players compete for the highest points and best times. In the two special events, Pool Jousting and City Downhill Battle, the player competes against an opponent – either a second player or one of three computer adversaries. It's certainly looking good, but you'll have to wait until next month for the review.

◀ Yet another skateboarding game – better go and dust off the old 'board!



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PREVIEW



► Judge Death boasts some smart Mega-City One graphics



ENGLISH SOFTWARE

Another firm marketed by US Gold, English Software, are currently working on *Octapolis*, which they describe as 'shoot 'em up action united with challenging platform encounters'. This means a strange mix of perspective platform action, with split-screen scrolling and a spaceship flying over the top!

The player takes control of a pilot who has been chosen to tackle the defences of a planet called Octapolis. This planet is the last obstacle to the Imperium's attempted Galactic domination, but it has one of the most impenetrable systems ever created, based on blocking attacker's thought patterns. It has taken 200 years to find a pilot immune to the mental power of the planet, so the role should not be taken lightly!

In what looks like a merger sure to be stranger than *Zig Zag*'s maze and shoot 'em up theme, *Octapolis* is truly attempting to break new ground – it should at least be interesting.

the four judges, which are shot for points, and others have innocent citizens, which are avoided. Similarly, in the second sub-game, dark judges appear in the midst of a crowd of citizens, and again must be carefully shot, as hitting innocents

impairs the player's score.

The game is currently at an early stage of development, with rather rough gameplay and crude graphics. Underneath, however, the action feels quite playable. We can but hope that Piranha manages to fulfill the game's potential.



▲ *Octapolis* features vertically scrolling split-screen blasting action

▼ Space sections of *Octapolis* boast 'Parallax perspective horizontal scroll!'



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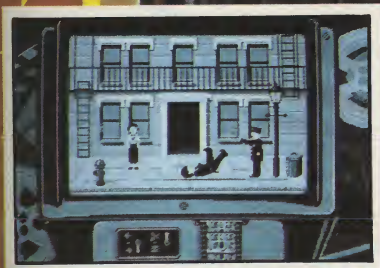
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For Gauntlet is the game of monsters and mazes that made Arcade game history by being the first to allow four players to each play a different character at the same time.

Unfortunately home computers don't come with four joystick ports. But the home computer version of Gauntlet still allows two players to compete together.

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At certain points you'll find keys dotted around the maze. Collect them whenever you can, for without the keys your way through the exit to the next level will be barred.

One factor that makes Gauntlet so enjoyable is that you don't keep getting killed. No matter how many monsters attack you, you'll stay in the game as long as there are points remaining in your health score.

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